

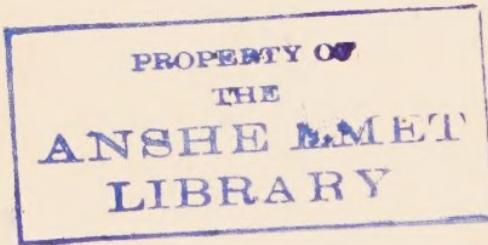
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My Month In Palestine

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טיט בטהנה בטאטוליה עשר ינבוּרָה:
דרפה ררייניס נול וטומה שעון:
צראים ראל זאַדְזֶה נה ווּבָרָה
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וינישוּהָקִים יוּעָטִילְלָה:

EUGENE KOHN

**MY
MONTH IN PALESTINE**

MY
MONTH IN PALESTINE

IMPRESSIONS OF TRAVEL

BY

RABBI MAX HELLER

NEW YORK
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1929

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BY
JAMES G. HELLER

TO THE MEMORY OF MY
BELOVED PARENTS
WHOSE FERVENT JEWISH
RELIGIOUSNESS WAS THE
STAFF AND BALM OF
THEIR LIVES



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FOREWORD

The Chapters comprised in this book appeared as articles in consecutive Sunday issues of the New Orleans Daily States from October 27, 1927 to January 29, 1928. They relate to a Palestinian stay which extended from April 15 to May 15, 1927. These narratives make no pretension either to novelty of theme or to scientific accuracy of presentation. They were written for the perusal of friends and neighbors as a record of the personal impressions of an interested traveler for whom human aspects and Jewish problems have a strong appeal. They seek to deal impartially with conditions as they disclosed themselves to the casual onlooker; they make no effort to disguise the writer's sympathy with Zionism.

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PREFACE

At the time of my father's death he was engaged in seeing the following chapters through the press. I have completed the work of correcting the proofs, but have left the manuscript exactly as my father wrote it.

To forestall misunderstanding attention should be directed to the fact that these observations on Palestine were intended not for Zionists but for the general non-Jewish public. Their simplicity and the elementary character of some of the information imparted are thus explained. Yet through them seem to me to shine the overflowing love my father brought to Palestine, the sensitivity to impressions of natural beauty and of human worth, the harmonious combination of Jewish and of secular culture, and the fairness of judgment that were notably his.

It is my hope that this little work may serve to fix in permanent form the record of a journey to the Holy Land destined to be both first and last, and in simple fashion to reveal to many the romance of Palestine's rebirth.

JAMES G. HELLER

CHAPTER I

APPROACHING PALESTINE

A TRIP to Palestine, like great events, is apt to cast its shadows ahead, especially a trip in the spring, when spring weather and Easter season hold out their special inducements.

Even on the transatlantic steamer one is sure to meet or hear of this or that pilgrim on board and destined for Palestine. In Paris, as one arranges for crossing the Mediterranean, one learns of some friend or friends who are bound for the Holy Land; in Marseilles, before one embarks for the Orient, it must be a dull eye which does not take in the various indications that one is coming nearer to the landscape colors and the typical features of Near East life.

One notes the date palms and fan palms, in squares and gardens, which, though not exclusively characteristic of the East, are in the nature of a first instalment towards its scenery; one perceives the mellow flavor of an old historic past, of associations in the long ago with Phenician and Greek,

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with Roman and Goth, Norman and Saracen; it gives one a curious, novel thrill to remember that through some of these streets strolled or was carried Julius Cæsar, that in this teeming, colorful harbor of the old Massilia have lain the war galleys and merchant craft of nation after nation, for something like a score and a half of centuries.

Marseilles, in its climate of the sub-tropical style, anticipates a number of things one expects to find in Palestine. Here are the patient little asses, with their toylike woolly heads, that carry such bulging packs on their sides and who, in the tranquil morning hour, raise their long drawn, plaintively sobbing brays in unavailing protest. Here one sees extremely young women carrying babes, evidently their own; other women walk along with towers of baskets, sometimes with heavy burdens, balanced on their heads.

And it is an experience to see the Mediterranean for the first time, not simply because it is the sea which laps the shores of Palestine or because it is that sea around which, for many centuries, great civilizations have risen and fallen, civilizations to which modern man owes so much of his religion and art, of literature and of law, but even for its own unfading beauty.

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Whatever has been said and written of the beauty of the Mediterranean is abundantly and indescribably true, especially to one who has the good fortune of a tranquil passage. Such deep hues of azure wave! Such fairylike sprays of snowy foam! Such tiny wavelets, with curling rills sparkling in the sun! Such rich and calm sunsets! It affects one like an impossible dream of beauty, like a feast that has been decked out for the eye. No wonder that it should have kindled a Byron, a Shelley to poetic raptures; everybody exclaims and exults at it, even those to whom it is far from new.

On our steamer from Marseilles to Alexandria, the *Champollion*, a large proportion of the passengers was Palestine-bound. There were those, of course, who were visiting Egypt; there was a picturesque group of medal-adorned, trim-looking French officers who, to quote the famous song, were *partant pour la Syrie*, going forth to troubled Syria; but the most conspicuous and numerically strongest class of passengers (mostly in first cabin) consisted of a pilgrimage, recruited largely from Southern France, the members of which wore at their lapels a large, white-bordered red cross.

They were led by two bishops and a number of

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priests and monks, most of them genial, intelligent types who mingled freely with the passengers and seemed, almost by preference, to fraternize with the officers, when duty did not call them to one of their three daily services or to satisfying the numerous questions and solicitudes of their flock.

The pilgrimage (*Pèlerinage National*) was managed by a kind-looking, elderly Franciscan, gray-bearded, bright-eyed, who gave out all notices; but its most eminent and conspicuous member was one of the bishops, a striking personality, whose brightly colored garb and finely cut features were in continual evidence, as he flitted untiringly from group to group. At the services he spoke with an easy, natural eloquence; in his conversation he seemed to possess an inexhaustible vein of humor. He surprised everybody, however, at least those among us who had not come into personal converse with him, by the delightful outburst of unaffected, infectious funmaking with which he managed to light up the customary charity entertainment on the last evening of the trip.

As an illustration of French temperamental gayety his bearing on that occasion was as full of charm as it seemed exceptional in a prelate of his advanced age and high standing. After a round of

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more or less mediocre performances, mostly by amateur talent, and an informal, witty address by him, there was, first, the usual collection on behalf of some sailor charity; then, to stimulate generosity further in this direction, some water colors were auctioned off; but, more for the fun of it than with any view to large proceeds, these prizes were to go, not to the highest bidder, but to the last bid, no matter how small. The idea was that the picture could finally be bought for as little as a penny, if no one should follow with still another bid.

The bishop entered into the game with all the fun and animation of a spirited boy; he kept the audience in a roar of laughter, first by stimulating the bidding with a multitude of fifty-centime pieces (worth two cents each) he had in his pockets, then, conducting the auction himself, by rushing laughingly from bidder to bidder, assuring each that his or her bid was certain to be the last, that he would get the picture for a mere song. To the people from Anglo-Saxon lands it was a fascinating demonstration of that Latin temperament which knows how to take pleasure, not sadly or toilsomely, but with all the happy *abandon* of the care-free child. Perhaps it also suggested the thought that religion

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need not frown upon innocent mirth, that dignity, even solemnity are by no means incompatible with the sense of humor and the spirit of fun.

There was an unorganized class of pilgrims, most of them in second cabin: Jewish people of various classes who were seeking out Palestine as, in one way or another, their homeland.

Perhaps the most interesting figure among them was a powerful man, the skin of his face sun-scorched till it resembled parchment, gestures rough and language awkward, one of the pioneer builders of Tel Aviv which is the modern suburb of Jaffa, peopled entirely by Jews, a mushroom growth of the last decade or so. There was an old rabbi from the New York ghetto, soft gray beard, fine blue eyes, with the gentlest of bearings; I was to meet him later again in one of the colonies, where he delighted in talmudical discussions with seminarians; there was a young journalist from Warsaw, grandson of a famous writer, reading New-Hebrew all the time, speaking German with an atrocious accent, but excellent phraseology; there was a specimen of muscular Judaism, a New York business man of huge build, whose Jewish loyalty was of a rather truculent order.

Among the Jewish women there was one, highly

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educated, mistress of a number of languages, who could not obtain a visa, even to Egypt, because, having left Russia some time ago, she was technically without a fatherland (the "Stateless" they call people of this class). A still sadder case was that of a destitute boy whose eagerness to go to Palestine had caused him to stow himself on board until hunger drove him forth; a collection among some of the Jewish passengers enabled him to have his wish.

Most of the first-cabiners were unaware of the existence of a steerage until, just prior to our disembarkment, the passport inspection by Egyptian officers brought its denizens to our deck. It was a curious group of a dozen or more Oriental laborers, heads swathed in cloth that may once have been white, clothes shabby, torn, but faces vivid and picturesque, the eyes of some reminding of fiery horses, those of others gentle and kindly.

Egypt is the front door to Palestine. In a few decades, perhaps, the Holy Land may reach a stage of development when Palestinian harbors and Palestinian commerce will adequately support a number of direct lines from all the more important ports of Europe and America. At present the old ports of Jaffa and Haifa are still far from satis-

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fying modern demands, so that the principal approaches are from Alexandria in the south and, to a minor extent, from Beyrouth in the north.

In Alexandria the temptation is very great to push on to Cairo and to have at least a glimpse of the real Egypt, of Nile and desert, of Pyramid and Sphinx. And the "House of Bondage" figured so early and so prominently in the history of the Jews, it left (by way of revulsion, at least) so strong an impress on the Jewish faith, it stands, in the Bible, for so much that is typical of certain aspects, that it would seem worth while to linger a few days upon that impressive threshold to the Bible story.

But when one is keen to reach Jerusalem for the Passover feast, when one would rather not avail himself of the quicker and more convenient rail-line from Cairo to Jerusalem, but insists on taking the more difficult and uncertain sea route, one hovers at the gates of Pharaohland only just long enough to make sure of as comfortable a sea passage as one can manage to find.

Alexandria itself is a rather interesting harbor city. The professional sightseer would probably glean out of his Baedeker all sorts of wonders to stare at; for the pilgrim in quest of Palestine such things have, at best, a faint interest; atmosphere

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and physiognomy, conditions of life, typical features, are apt to be more instructive in a land next door to Palestine and largely under the same government. When one passes not quite three days in a country and does not propose to spend them either in breathless rushing about or in poring over books, there is no better way for absorbing, quietly and delightedly, at least a few things that are strikingly new and typically characteristic, than just a free, aimless ramble, sauntering along, gazing at show windows, enjoying the motley crowd in the busy centers and taking in the quieter life of side street or alley.

There are, of course, the broad modern streets, reasonably clean, well lighted, with open spaces for palms and shrubbery, with public buildings, tourist hotels, showy stores down town, fine residences amid park-like gardens up town; there are the narrow, crowded native bazaars, quaintly Oriental, black with age, not overly clean or fragrant. When one is utterly ignorant of modern Arabic and has no more than faint school reminiscences of the classical variety, one does not greatly care to venture into these hubbubs without a guide; and Egyptian guides are only too apt to repel one at once by their exorbitant charges and sinister

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offers. In all probability there is but little difference between the old bazaars of Alexandria and those of Jerusalem; in Cairo, upon my return from Palestine, I found in the principal bazaars, under the guidance of a prominent native, a great deal that proved uniquely interesting, artistically quaint and of venerable age.

But, without ever venturing very far from one's hotel near the shore, one could trace a good deal of the superficial Egyptian life, as one mingled with the throng.

In such a harbor city, of course, particularly around Easter, tourists abound, with Americans and English people predominating. Yet, from any mere reading of business signs, one is instantly struck with the puzzling fact that of all foreign languages, not English, but French is the one which has the greatest vogue in Egypt. Upon inquiry several explanations were offered of which the most plausible was given by a Cairo resident who claims that, while the English have been strangely indifferent to the propagation of their tongue among the Egyptian populace, the French have established, for decades, excellent mission schools which are being attended by the best element.

On all hands, even in the midst of the pros-

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perous crowds down town, there is evidence of grinding poverty and hard times. As in all warm countries, there is, of course, much loafing, day sleeping on benches and in corners, lounging around in groups; there are slouching figures of both sexes in clothes threadbare, patched and dingy. More pathetically significant are the many perambulant vendors who squeeze a scant living out of incredibly small businesses: a small plate full of collar buttons, a wreath of slippers suspended from the neck, a brass pitcher of lemonade, a small platter of pistachio nuts and the like; boothblacks pursue one from street to street, children, in bands, beg for *bakshish* as soon as they spot a tourist.

It is a noisy, animated, colorful life; but poverty and primitive civilization are written in sprawling letters across it. Women whose faces are carefully veiled, wearing a yellow stick with three brass rings which rides the nose to hold head veil and chin veil together, walk bare-legged and barefoot; other women show silver anklets, while still others are tattooed around mouth and chin; many Egyptians, on the other hand, wear modern dress which the men modify with their fez caps.

You come upon a group of idlers, some sixty

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or seventy, surrounding an easel on which is a blackboard covered with numbers; it turns out to be an extemporized street lottery; not only are many show windows adorned with tempting lottery tickets, but on the streets you are constantly solicited to buy them.

Yet there is much in Alexandria that is delightfully modern and amazingly up-to-date. The residences up town are, many of them, of impressive magnificence and in excellent taste; in their gardens, most of them walled in, one can see much the same trees, palms and flowers as in our own Southern climate, though one of our trees, our magnolia, is equalled nowhere in size and beauty, whether by her sisters here or those in Italy. Alexandria, by the way, is on exactly the same degree of latitude as New Orleans and has about the same size of population; some of the older streets are paved with square granite blocks such as we used to be familiar with on our old streets. In Port Said, later on, I even saw houses with ornamental cast-iron fronts such as we are accustomed to associate with our pre-war mansions.

To the haphazard, unsystematic tourist Alexandria presents two interesting surprises: its splendid

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embankment and its luxurious confectioneries, the one treated with undeserved neglect, the others teeming, especially at tea time and in the evening, with gay throngs.

There cannot be in existence many harbor embankments on as large a scale and as comfortable for promenading as that of Alexandria; it forms an enormous horseshoe which it takes at least a half-hour's walk to measure; it is broad, well paved, well lighted, with an abundance of benches for resting; it abuts on a wide street, shaded by fine trees; and the view upon the Mediterranean is delightful at all times. Yet mornings, evenings or night times you see very few people who care to avail themselves of such a rare privilege.

There are, on the other hand, some four or five large confectioneries which seem to outrival, in the expensiveness of their furnishings, in extravagant splendor of decoration, in the profusion, costliness and variety of their wares, anything that New York, London or Paris has to show. The display, in their show windows and on their shelves, of high-priced, hand-decorated Easter eggs would seem sufficient to supply the probable demands of at least four or five cities of Alexandria's size.

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The proprietors of most of these places are Greeks of whom there is said to be a large and highly prosperous population.

Altogether, it is a strange mingling of the cosmopolitan and the native, of refinement and semi-barbarism, of romance and poverty. Egyptian officialdom impresses one as a little cocky with new-won independence; the poor classes have the humble look of a populace that has borne the yoke of bondage for uncounted centuries.

The Egyptian of the lower classes, somehow, does not convey the impression of virility, simple dignity and outdoor-life sturdiness which is created by the Palestinian Arab. It may be an unjust approach to hold in one's mind constantly, on the one hand, the Hebrew Bible's contempt for the "house of bondage," the "land of darkness," the civilization of graves, the "broken reed;" it may, on the other hand, involve an injustice to the present, constantly to recall the inconceivable masses of slave labor that went to the building of those astounding monuments, the perpetual change of masters which unfortunate Egypt has been undergoing for centuries upon centuries. In Switzerland, however, at a later date, when I met a leading Egyptian financier of wide experience

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and vast intercourse, I was assured that my impression as to the temperamental slavishness of the population (despite all agitations for independence), is borne out by the observation of those who have lived in Egypt all their lives.

CHAPTER II

ENTERING PALESTINE

WHICH is the best way to enter Palestine? I had asked that question of myself and of many friends, both personally and by correspondence, several months before I had set out upon my trip. It became evident very soon that I had ideas and preferences of which hardly any man could be found to approve. I could not bear to think of entering Palestine by land; to look out of a car window on a gray morning at some dreary way-station and to be shown some stick or fence where the Sinai peninsula stops and Palestine begins—to have that sort of introduction to the land of my fathers, to the home of my dreams of a lifetime—the very idea seemed to me fraught with desecration, at least with intolerable prose.

But whenever I asked any person of experience: what boat can I take from Alexandria or Port Said to land at either Jaffa or Haifa? the bland answer I invariably met with was: there is a nice train from Cairo to Jerusalem. If, thereupon, I

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would try to tell my friend how greatly I preferred to have my first sight of the Holy Land as it gradually loomed up out of the sea, he would shrug his shoulders unsympathetically and tell me that landing at either of these crude ports was an unpalatable business in most weathers; that, should the weather happen to be stormy, the boat would not be able to discharge its passengers at all, but would go on to Beyrouth; that, even should we strike a merely unquiet sea, the passengers would have to be carried in arms to the shore.

I was not to be discouraged, however; even when I found that no berth was to be gotten on the *Umbria*, a modern boat, I engaged passage on a small, slow vessel, the *Praga*, an Austrian craft.

The experience proved far from unpleasant; my persistency had more than its due reward. To be equipped for the full enjoyment of travel, one must be prepared for an occasional taste of the simple life and one must not object to a mild flavoring of adventure now and then. To travel on an old-fashioned steamer with comforts a little crude, passengers few and of mixed quality, movement rather leisurely and uncertain, has its advantages and compensations. You have your choice of cabins, the deck promenades are not obstructed

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by a mass of steamer-chairs, the food is likely to remind of home-cooking, and the intercourse with officers and passengers is more apt to be informal. The captain, an elderly man of bluff ways and genial temperament, speaking German with a strong Tyrolese accent, had seen a great part of the world, had lost all his savings in the war, but none of his humor and light-heartedness. The officers were partly Italians, partly Austrians; service at table and in the cabins was courteous and efficient. Most of the passengers spoke German, a French couple seemed to feel rather lost; in the writing-room one could work away undisturbed.

The trip consumed two nights and a day; it brought us, after the first night, to Port Said, where almost the entire day was passed, partly in coaling the vessel, partly in taking on freight for Jaffa. Conspicuous in the harbor of Port Said, where one enters the Suez Canal, is the imposing statue of the genius who both conceived and carried out that epochal achievement, of Ferdinand de Lesseps. A few of us went ashore for a ramble in the bazaars of that important port where curious wares abound and tourists from many vessels swarm about; during the hot afternoon everybody preferred to stay on the vessel where shade and

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breeze invited to a comfortable siesta. Watching the Arab laborers, as they filled every available space with boxes and barrels, was by no means an uninteresting pastime; in some ways they reminded of our own negro workmen, as they had their sing-song for every lifting or dropping of their burden; there were among them some brawny, statuesque figures of powerful proportions and graceful movements. Among the Arabs handsome men abound; one seems to encounter specimens of the Valentino-sheik type everywhere; the voices often have a vibrant ring of cordiality; when the Arab workman contends excitedly for some injured right or other you glean, even out of words you cannot understand, a certain note of righteous indignation, which seems virile and morally fine.

It is not easy to command sound sleep the night before one is to enter Palestine; one may reason with himself as much as he likes, try to calm himself by every imaginable contrivance; there is an undercurrent of excited expectation, an insistent subconsciousness of something mysteriously great impending which raises one's heart beats and imparts restlessness to one's thoughts.

Having slept very little, I heard, around five o'clock in the morning, the familiar voice of a

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rabbi friend from second cabin, as he walked, with a companion, past my window. I had met, in second cabin, a number of interesting Jewish pilgrims: a Palestinian rabbi, a young man with blue-black, silken beard and flower-like complexion; some business men with a good knowledge of Hebrew; some women with small children, speaking a Jewishly colored German; among passengers of the third class I had met a young printer with considerable Hebrew knowledge who lacked the little sum which would permit him to enter Palestine; it is almost impossible to resist a temptation of that sort; yet one cannot by any means feel certain that that sort of charity results in any permanent good, whether to its recipient or to Palestine.

One observes, before one ever enters it, the opposite reactions which the Holy Land exercises on people of different temperaments. The young rabbi in second cabin was returning to Palestine in order to persuade his wife in Jerusalem to make her and their children's home with him in America, where he had found life congenial; he feared she would refuse to leave the holy soil and the many ties of love which bound her to it. Conversely, one of the young women, with her two children, was coming, most unwillingly, to join her Zionist husband whose

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enthusiasm she is far from sharing, inasmuch as living in Berlin spells to her the nearest earthly approach to paradise. I shared the auto with her on my trip from Jaffa to Jerusalem; her bitter indictments against Palestinian life and Palestinian ways (she had lived there before) would have gone far towards spoiling my enjoyment of that memorable ride, had I not been too immersed in my revels of ecstasy to admit of any annoyance whatever from her venomous grumblings.

But to return to the story of our landing. Aroused from my doze, finding that the day was dawning, I got on deck as quickly as I could manage; there was a moving spectacle, unforgettable. Through clouds and a faint mist the sun had flung a dazzling, long-drawn line of light, shimmering upon the waters, in front of another, bluish-gray line of hills, dotted with faint spots of white, the hills of Judea! My heart seemed to leap into my mouth. Standing alone and unobserved at the vessel's front, I burst into tears, mostly of joy, not unmixed with mourning. The land of my ideals, the land of Jewish love and Jewish pride, the land for which I had struggled and prayed and, sometimes, suffered—I was to set foot on it in but a few hours; I was to see its beauty and its desola-

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tion, I was to review our triumphs and defeats on that precious soil! There was not soul stirring; I walked the deck for half an hour to quiet my bitter-sweet excitement.

Yet there was exultation in my heart, after all, that I had stood out against all the warnings of the worldly-wise and insisted on my way; there was something fairylike, something imposingly calm and majestically strong in the quiet rising of that enchanting shore.

A cool, pleasant wind had been blowing from the land while the ship was slowly drawing nearer. I had done my little packing, distributed the customary tips; I walked around the promenade deck, watching the outlines of the shore, as they became clearer and clearer.

A picturesque shore, full of type and character; white houses climbing up a line of low, gray hills; blue mountain ranges in the rear; towers here and there among the houses, some of which were low, flat-roofed, their roofs of that pale brown red which mingled well with the cream color of stone and plaster; a kind of castle at the top. Tel Aviv, that famous suburb of an all-Jewish population and Jewish government, was in the distance, hidden by the mists.

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After a hurried breakfast we were near enough for boats to approach us from the shore; some brief formalities had to be gone through with by officers of the Palestine health department; boats soon swarmed about us from which multitudes of people clambered upon the ship in pursuit of various solicitations. Some twelve of us, all Jews and Jewesses, filed into a boat with our handbaggage in a sea as calm as one could wish for.

One of the women urged that one must enter Palestine with song; our various attempts at Hebrew and Yiddish songs proved failures; our senses were too much engrossed with the sights ahead of us. As we had descended into the boat, there had been a burst of melodious chimes from some church, we passed some picturesque, moss-cushioned rocks, vivid green amid the blue waters; silently we clambered up the big stones lining the embankment; we were stepping on Palestinian soil.

A number of formalities had to be satisfied, before we could be released for our various errands. The customs department proved annoyingly rigid; the health authorities insisted on vaccination; in attending to money matters and to baggage I had my first taste of Palestinian conditions.

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Almost the first outstanding fact that faces one is the resurrection of the ancient Hebrew tongue. I paid my bill to the Palestine Jewish Service; the pretty girl clerk addressed me in Hebrew and presented a bill in Hebrew characters. I went to a Jewish bank to exchange some money; the gentleman who waited on me drew me into a Hebrew conversation and showed me a Hebrew dictionary he is writing of which some 300 pages were then already in press. He is a scholar of some distinction; his daughter is married to a son of Sir Herbert Samuel, the first High Commissioner of Palestine. The books of the bank are kept in Hebrew. The rebirth of the old Bible tongue is one of the romances of Palestine reawakening and one of the achievements of revolutionizing pioneer effort.

A rather different, but in its way significant experience I had, when I looked about for some one to convey my handbags from the quarantine station to the auto which was to carry me to Jerusalem. A pallid, emaciated Jewish lad had been after me to give him a chance; I did so rather reluctantly, as he looked too weak to cope with the job; he manfully jogged on along the uneven road, but was constantly teased by sturdy-looking Arabs to give the job up to them; as he passed a

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little Arab girl who was sitting on a low wall, she said in Arabic "go into the mud;" she evidently felt he was taking the bread out of Arab mouths. Thus one is confronted, on the threshold, with the problems of racial jealousy and labor competition, as they trouble Palestine, more or less in common with the rest of the world.

We traveled together, the grumbling immigrant woman with her children, hunched amid the baggage in the body of the machine, I with the driver in front, we traveled up hill and down dale on the Jaffa road, an excellent road on the whole, here and there a little rough, sometimes ideal, at other times a good average. In my Palestinian travels I must have covered by auto some 700 or 800 miles of road; I did so mostly in the company of Palestinians who knew the history of every road. It seems there are some few roads, not so very bad, which the Turkish government had built before the war; but it is generally admitted that the very best roads are those that have been built by a novel class of workers, the so-called *Chalutzim* and *Chalutzoth* (which means pioneers), Jewish young men and women, mostly from Russia, many of them university students, some of them Communists, all of them fearless, independent ideal-

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ists who, often with bleeding hands and bleeding feet, sometimes even starving and freezing, set themselves joyfully to this and similar tasks, in the glorious feeling that they were helping to up-build the land of their fathers.

And it was my first taste of the Palestinian landscape. The subject is one which is not easy to approach; one has constantly to be on his guard against the temptation to exaggerate. It is a curious whim of human nature how one can be comparatively indifferent to painted landscapes, rarely finding in them anything to give rise to intense artistic pleasure and yet be moved to ecstatic admiration by the shapes and hues of nature's landscaping. Palestine has to me a beauty as great (on its small scale) as Switzerland or Colorado, as brilliant in places as Naples or Geneva, but a beauty, somehow, that is infinitely more appealing, especially in its setting of historic associations.

Palestine is a land of hills and mountain-chains, of lakes and seaside; it has its summit covered with perpetual snow and it has the greatest depression beneath sea-level on the entire globe. On the hard-headed, practical business-man it is likely to make a bad impression. I have hardly ever seen more stones to the square foot than here; except

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in the valleys and plains, it is rock and stone almost everywhere, when it is not swamp or sand.

But what beautiful terraces the Jewish labor of long-gone centuries has made of those stone-bottomed and stone-strewn hill-chains! In my several trips I have seen these hillsides by the hundreds; I have seen them of all imaginable shapes, with broad bands of terrace or with narrow lines, horizontal or sloping, regular or irregular. I have seen them planted with grain, with vines or olives; I have seen them as meadows resplendent with flowers or as lean pasture for sheep or goat, or as cactus and thistle soil for camel and donkey; and I have seen them, above all, in almost every conceivable light, under rising and setting sun, in a driving rain, under mists and through clouds, with the sun irradiating or with the shadows darkening them—I cannot do anything approaching justice to their richness of expression, to their endless variety of color, of outline, of combination; they are the backbone and the clear-lined countenance of the country. A unique type of geological configuration has put them there; it is their beauty, with the rich soil of the valleys between them, which has had much to do with ripening the culture which arose there: resistent granite, alternat-

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ing with luscious soil; a richer brown I have never seen than the deep, rusty brown, promise of all that is sustaining, of Palestine humus.

But one must see these hills outlined sharply against the sky, that silver gray against that deep azure! One must look, from the hill-combs, down into the valleys: such rich greens of young wheat, side by side with the deep browns of freshly plowed and the lighter browns of the dryer soil! And then one must drink in those fairy hues of middle and farther distance: the incredible purples, half dulled by the haze, then those rose-purples and subdued blues and grays with which, in the evening dawn, field melts into hill and hill into sky, until one's eye is drunk with the picture and one cannot help sighing, that all this must fade like a flower, fade into the creeping darkness, fade, at least in its individual lines, in even the most vividly fresh memory which cannot possibly hold pattern after pattern of all this feast of beauty.

Civilization's Holy Land, the Bible's land of Israel! Cultivated, in its days of glory, by a peasantry that adored its soil, extolled in the burning eloquence of poet and seer, drenched with the blood of heroes, martyrs and saints, living, through

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twenty centuries of exile, in the prayers, in the yearnings of a dungeoned people; a land, at last beginning to breathe with a labored but stimulated breath of fresh hope and frantic toil. One cannot but love this land; it has been martyred, as the age-old victim of war and barbarism; it will yet be maltreated, it is to be feared, for a long time; but the day must come when it will shine out, not only to the eye that loves beauty, to the soul that reveres holiness, but also to the heart which responds to the call of justice!

CHAPTER III

SAMARITAN PASSOVER AND MOSLEM PILGRIMAGE

ON a first ride through a country like Palestine one's senses are wide awake above the ordinary; one has a fresher perception for whatever is quaint and novel. The road from Jaffa to Jerusalem passes, at a greater or less distance, the oldest Jewish agricultural school, Mikveh Israel, and a number of important Jewish colonies; but of these little could be seen from a speeding auto and, beyond the mere names, no information was volunteered either by my bitterly critical fellow-passenger or by the uncommunicative chauffeur.

A number of things thrust themselves upon one's attention; the hedges along the road were mostly of stone, but very often of a tall, large cactus, with thick, gnarled, rough-looking stems; later in the season these hedges were covered with large brown and yellow blossoms which lent them a certain beauty; in dry weather they are gray with accumulated dust. In the fields one saw hardly any cattle,

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but here and there flocks of sheep and goats. In Palestine it is not easy to tell these apart; both have large, flapping ears and are mostly black, the sheep have very fat tails.

Storks are seen in the fields, also a kind of heron; the bird life seems varied and interesting. Camels pass in whole strings or pasture leisurely in the fields; it is curious to see a procession of these ungainly animals with some boy, a mere baby, leading the first one by a rope. In Palestine the camel, like the Arab peasant, represents cheap and slow labor; auto and motor truck, it is claimed, will before long banish it back to its native home, the desert.

The Arab towns and villages we pass look picturesque from the distance, with flat roofs rising above one another, but lose all charm when one views close at hand their dung-hills and repulsive shanties of rusty corrugated iron. The Arab, lolling in the shade, recalls the Mexican drowsing in front of his adobe hut. Here and there workmen sit by the road, breaking stones for its repair; some of the Arabs walk along barefoot, shoes in hand; as the auto passes them, they cover their mouths against the dust.

We have been climbing steadily, houses begin

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to multiply; we are in the scattering suburbs of Jerusalem; before we are aware of it, we are in Jerusalem which we enter by the old Jaffa gate.

A most unedifying approach, perhaps the most unimpressive of them all; you see some fragments of a town, some ugly side streets and you are in it already. One must come from the opposite side to get a conception of the majesty of Jerusalem. When one comes back from Nablus (Shechem), when one has climbed slope upon slope to the last one, when Jerusalem bursts upon one with its broad mass of flat-roofed houses and domes and towers, the sun glittering on many a shining surface, all white, innocent of smoke or grime, a city throned upon the hills—it is then that one re-echoes Jeremiah's acclaim: "The perfection of beauty! Joy of the whole earth!" that one understands the psalmist's mighty oath, when he asks that his right hand be lamed and his tongue stilled, if ever he can forget Jerusalem, if ever he should fail to set her above all other joys!

It was a little difficult, despite advance notice, to obtain satisfactory hotel accommodation; Passover and Easter are the high tide of the tourist spring season. There was assurance, however, of meeting many friends, not only among Palestinian workers

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who had visited our country, but among American fellow pilgrims. Almost immediately upon my arrival I received a welcome invitation to join some American friends in an interesting excursion the next day; to witness the Passover ceremony of the Samaritans.

Most readers know about the Samaritans only through the beautiful story in the New Testament which has made their name a proverb for tender mercy to the afflicted. Not so many will recall the controversy at the building of the Second Temple which had led to the forming of the Samaritan sect, when the Jews rejected their offer of coöperation, partly because they were of mixed racial origin, partly because their religion was suspected of idolatrous leanings. The subsequent career of the Samaritans tended to widen the breach between them and the Jews; they had brief periods of prosperity during which, at various times, they had a temple on Mount Gerizim which they revere as their holy mountain; at one time there was such a thing as a Samaritan literature, consisting mostly of commentaries, prayers, hymns and the like; of the Bible they have merely the Pentateuch of which they preserve a text of their own, also the book of Joshua; the Samaritan language, an Aramaic

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dialect, is written in letters which closely resemble the ancient Hebrew characters. They represent a mere remnant now, a group of less than two hundred people.

We had about an hour and a half's ride in the morning from Jerusalem to Nablus (a corruption of the Greek name, Neapolis), the Biblical town of Shechem; it is the town where the Samaritans live, at the foot of Mt. Gerizim, a town of little more than hovels, which is said to have suffered almost complete destruction in the recent earthquake.

The ride presented hardly any feature that would cling to one's memory; on arriving at Nablus one is confronted with the two opposite elevations, Mt. Gerizim and Mt. Ebal, remembered principally from the famous passage in Deuteronomy where Moses charges that, after Israel's entrance into the Holy Land, God's blessing for the nation should be pronounced from Mt. Gerizim and the curse from Mt. Ebal. Standing at the foot of Gerizim and seeing Ebal from a distance (both hills have very little of tree-growth), one is apt to fancy that the mountain of blessing is all flowers and that of the curse all cactus and thistle; but there is, in actuality, no such sharp difference be-

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tween them. As it takes a rather warm climb, some 2,400 feet or more of elevation, to reach the Passover camp at the summit, most of us were only too glad to avail ourselves of the little asses that stood ready to convey us; many of the younger people walked up, also some of the older women who objected to riding on the peculiarly shaped saddles.

We went about, choosing donkeys; rather imprudently I picked a maternal lady, with her filly standing near. The lazy creature had very little ambition to move, especially in proportion to her partiality for thistles which, I must admit, look seductive to a non-donkey eye, too, even if not for eating. Palestine, one hates to admit, is a veritable paradise for donkeys; one cannot help being struck with the beauty and variety of donkey food one finds here. One species, with yellow blossoms, is particularly pretty; another is so large that it is easily mistaken for an artichoke.

My mother-donkey was hard to induce in a forward direction; she had a consuming ambition to fetch up last in the long procession up the mountain and, consequently, let everybody pass her. Compassionate people who watched my unsuccessful struggles, first gave her an occasional knock with a stick or cane which would set her off for a

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minute or so, then some charitable soul found a bit of rusty steel with a few interesting points to insinuate into her tough anatomy; that did, at times, stimulate her pace at bit; finally one of my numerous advisers suggested that I kick her in the ribs; when I tried the experiment with due caution and undue gentleness, I had some indignant looks from three over-slender English spinsters who happened to be climbing up behind me. I would have gladly forgiven my long-eared fellow-creature, had she shown the least bit of concern for her cunning little filly which clung to us along our laborious progression; but every luscious thistle seemed to her to be worth at least two fillies.

We did, finally, fetch up to near the summit where, we were told, the Samaritans are in the habit of spending the nights of the entire Passover month; the tents were, almost all of them, open, expectant of visitors. The Samaritans seem to be very poor; they try to sell all sorts of souvenirs, primitive symbolic drawings, some prayerbooks and the like.

We visited the High Priest in his tent; he, as well as a number of the younger men, could manage to converse brokenly in Hebrew. I was told

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that there has been a certain improvement in feeling between Samaritan and Jew; they sometimes engage a Jewish teacher for their children and there is even report of a marriage between a Samaritan and a Yemenite (Jew from southern Arabia). I was told upon inquiry that, with one or two exceptions, all the Samaritans live in or very near Nablus; those living away come home for the Passover; in former centuries there have been a few scattered colonies of Samaritans.

The ceremonies of the Passover sacrifice began around the noon hour; the place was indicated by a semicircular stone fence near which, at one end, was a tent from which the High Priest directed the proceedings and delivered a short address; at the opposite end there were two kettles filled with water that was being heated by some sticks of wood. It was a tedious ceremony, partly savage, partly inane, impressive solely as one reflected upon the hoary antiquity to which these artless, barbarous proceedings dated back.

The Samaritans of the male sex: old, middle-aged, boys, stood in a kind of oval ring, clapped hands, sang. Some five or six sheep were first driven into the High Priest's tent, then into the circle, thrown to the ground, feet up, then two

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slaughterers slit their throats, mouths held to prevent a sound; while the sheep were breathing their last, loud singing and clapping of hands; a young father smears blood from one sheep on his baby's nose and around the mouth, perhaps some superstitious practice on behalf of a sickly baby. In about ten minutes all the sheep are dead; there-upon ensues a long process, consuming about half an hour, of taking off the wool by pouring hot water upon the skin from the kettles; the smaller boys are particularly active in the cleaning.

Some time before that the High Priest, amid comparative quiet, had delivered a seven-minute address (I learned afterwards that he had praised the British government for protecting them in their rites) followed by enthusiastic hand-clapping; all during the wool-plucking there was incessant singing (some holding books), with funny facial contortions on the part of some enthusiasts.

It was interesting, of course, to observe costumes and physiognomies. The grown men and half-grown boys were dressed with ridiculous scantiness, all wore slippers; the women, standing aside in a corner, were mostly in black garb, faces unveiled. Two of the children were blondes, their father red-haired; one little girl had a face which

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reminded of south Italian types; most physiognomies resembled Jewish types. One of the men wore a gold wrist watch.

The ring of male Samaritans was enclosed almost completely by a ring of British soldiery and police; a riot had broken out the year before, through some boy having thrown a stone. The British soldier forms a striking contrast to the excited populace; in his trim khaki, his countenance set in rigid lines, he stalks about with an air of rather conscious supremacy; it is very much with the same impenetrable haughtiness that the Roman soldier must have passed through the restless Jewish throngs, many centuries ago.

The audience, a large part of which sought positions of vantage on the stone fence, must have counted some 300 or 400 people, mostly tourists, with a sprinkling of Arabs; it was curious how many American friends one encountered, both here and, later on, in descending. Most of us tired of the monotony of it all and preferred not to wait until the sheep carcasses were carried to the holes in the ground over which they were to be roasted. As we made ready to leave, there was a naïve episode; the High Priest came towards me and asked in broken Hebrew: "Was our Passover

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nice?" I answered, "Very nice" with a bad conscience, but rather touched by the childlikeness of the query.

There is something pathetic about a dying survival like these Samaritan ceremonies which have been written up a great deal of late. The constancy which clings to ancestral customs, unwaveringly, through interminable ages, compels a measure of respect for the endurance of its faithfulness; but where a tiny, impoverished sect stages a religious exhibition annually before hundreds of gaping sightseers, a good deal of the sincere devoutness which formerly animated it, is bound to evaporate; the temptation cannot be resisted to exploit the occasion for selling all sorts of worthless curios.

For the last decades these poor people have been compelled by their necessitous condition to sell some of their valuable manuscripts, to send their High Priest on expeditions to solicit aid; under the stress of poverty a meager remnant of that sort is certain to lose much of its dignity and simplicity. Inbreeding dooms so small a group to certain extinction; if the single instance of the Yemenite marriage might be trusted as an indication, there may be a possibility of reassimilation, in time, with the Jewish parent-stem.

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In this connection I may as well describe another quasi-religious observance, far less venerable in age, perhaps, also less deserving of respect, which I had occasion to witness during the first few days of my stay in Jerusalem.

Among the Palestinian Moslems this is the season of what they call *Nabi Musa* which means "Prophet Moses," a comparatively recent innovation, I was told, which, it is claimed, was originated by the politicians for the purpose of getting the people together. It represents a popular pilgrimage to the pretended grave of Moses. Just how any ingenious person or persons did contrive to discover the burial place of Moses, when the Bible says of it that "not a man knoweth his place of burial to this day," it is not easy to imagine; from the Bible's account it is perfectly clear that the meek lawgiver did his successful best to conceal his last resting place for the very purpose of crushing in the bud every attempt at hero worship or deification.

Since, however, even the Bible cannot protect itself against misinterpretation or distortion, the Palestinian Moslems are somehow persuaded that they know the exact tomb of Moses and they chose this season for popular processions to that tomb.

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For several days one sees the people, in family groups, trudging, in their best clothes, along the road; on Sunday morning a number of us rented seats on a balcony near the Jaffa gate to take in the sights of the main procession.

It was, if anything, even more wearisome and inane than the Samaritan rites had been, except that the picturesque slopes around that castellated old town gate, black with throngs of onlookers, and the seething, very slow-moving masses of the Moslem pilgrims lent it a certain coloring of romance. Perched on high as we were, we listened to the doleful singing, accentuated by some people with slim, bent canes such as our fakirs sell at circuses and fairs. A man, straddling some other man's shoulders, would ride along a front, issuing commands, directing songs; sword-dancers, the audience forming a ring around them, would attack and elude each other; at one time a group, under some cane-carrier's command, would go through all sorts of kneeling, crouching, arm-extending evolutions, almost reminding of ballet girls. There were, of course, large bodies of police and soldiers everywhere, to forestall outbreaks. One tired of the monotonous and crude business, savagely picturesque though it was.

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From the whole childish spectacle one had no other reflection to carry away than this, that among semi-civilized races our age can manufacture legends and beget faith like any other; that nothing is too absurd or too improbable to believe. Brigham Young interpreted that matchless Bible verse: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," as a justification, under certain circumstances, for murder; with something like the same inverted logic can the Arab politician rise up to shake out of his sleeve information about Moses which the Bible professes itself utterly unable to give.

CHAPTER IV

PASSOVER AND JERUSALEM VISITS

I HAD timed my visit to Palestine to start with the Passover season, partly because of the charm of the Palestine spring which is described with such glowing colors in the Song of Songs, but even more so for the purpose of realizing a life-time wish. From my earliest childhood I had been deeply impressed, in my parental home, by the fervent hopefulness with which, in the family service of Passover Eve, the assurance is given, both at the start and at the end of the service, that the next year would find us in Jerusalem. To celebrate our feast of national liberation in the Holy City which embodies so much of prophetic aspiration and national glory, to make true the yearning sentiment which had upborne the souls of my fathers through ages of darkness, that seemed to me one of the rarest of life's consummations.

I had arrived in Jerusalem only a few days before the Passover, but, through the kindness of friends, I had the good fortune of being invited to

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share the Passover meal with one of the best known of Jerusalem families, at the home of the oldest Jewish physician in Palestine, a man prominently connected with the Jerusalem hospital service, on the one hand, and with the movement for the revival of the Hebrew language, on the other.

In that home Hebrew is the predominant language, sometimes relieved by French, less often by English or German. Its venerable head was the second dictionary-writer I encountered in Palestine. He has, for years, been preparing a Hebrew dictionary of scientific terms and is generally regarded as the chief authority in an important field, the creation of a Hebrew terminology, principally for the medical sciences, but also in the wider departments of general science. He possesses an extensive library with many rare works and, despite his advanced age and important professional engagements, devotes much time and energy to this labor of love which will constitute his monumental contribution to the modernization of the ancient tongue.

In this as in other Jerusalem homes it was very interesting to examine the many Oriental antiquities and products of Palestinian art which create an individual atmosphere; almost every friend

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who had lived in Jerusalem for a number of years, had managed to grace his home with all sorts of quaint, artistic objects some of which testified to the remarkable art instincts and art traditions of the natives, others to the vigorous Jewish art revival with which there will be later occasion for dealing.

We had a very genial home ceremony, instinct with a combination of reverence and coziness, even though the guests had come from widely divergent places, such as Russia, Egypt, France and America.

The ceremony of the family meal on Passover Eve is one of the quaintest and most ancient observances in Judaism. It has grown out of a casual admonition of the Bible which asks the father to tell his son the story of the deliverance from Egyptian bondage. In a conscientious endeavor to enable the father to discharge this duty intelligently and fully, the rabbis built up a ritual called *Seder* (arrangement), the directions for which are given in a booklet named *Hagadah* (telling a story). The ritual abounds in symbolic rites and curious customs, the booklet is rich in child-like tales and ingenious interpretations, extolments of God's mercy and thanks for His bounties; it closes with songs, riddles and playful rhymes.

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While the celebration sounds some serious, vibrant notes, it is, on the whole, intended as a popular family observance, even purposely tuned down, now and then, to the intelligence of the children.

It starts with a hospitable invitation to the poor and needy; accordingly, two poor young students were among the guests; it proceeds with a series of questions as to the meaning of the Passover meal, to be asked of the head of the family by its youngest member; these questions were propounded by the little grandson, a youngster six years of age who read and spoke Hebrew fluently. Later in the evening this bright little fellow delighted his grandfather's heart by the ingenious manner in which he took advantage of an old custom.

Mostly to keep the children from falling asleep over the lengthy recitations, it was the practice that, as the head of the family, in the course of the service, puts aside a fragment of the unleavened bread, the child who manages to get that fragment while the father is not looking, was considered entitled to a present. During the evening meal which divides the ritual into two unequal parts, the little fellow managed to divert his grand-

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father's attention and to possess himself of the hidden wafer; when he was asked to name his own present, he chose a certain Hebrew book, to the gratification of his proud parents.

The service was led by the host; the guests took up the responses and hummed the old melodies; some of us were honored by being asked to read special prayers; one of the guests, an eminent musician, sang some of the closing hymns most acceptably; the various symbolic accessories: unleavened bread, bitter herb, apple and raisins, four cups of wine, were enjoyed in their turn; it was, though in a strange land, amid a gathering of people from the ends of the earth, a genial family festival, full of the spirit of gratitude, hopefulness and brotherliness.

This happy gathering was preceded and followed by two striking incidents which, in that environment, seemed, somehow, unique and significant. As we sauntered leisurely along the broad road towards our host's house we passed a small tavern where, in the mezzanine story, behind a large window, picturesquely latticed with wrought iron, there sat, in a brilliantly lighted room, a family around the table, observing its Passover ceremonies in the full view of the passers by. I had

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never seen, even in the old-time European ghetto of half a century ago, so frank and fearless an exhibition of religious exercise; it bespoke a perfect sense of at-homeness, a happy freedom from any fear of misunderstanding or disdain, elements which go far towards creating the spiritual atmosphere that is needed in a national home.

Again, when we had parted with our hosts and were walking along the famous Jaffa road towards our hotel, we were treated to a strange experience. The streets were crowded with people returning from the festive service, especially with young folks whose cheery spirits had been aroused and who thought it too early to retire. As we reached a certain widening of the street, we came upon a crowd of young men and women, probably a gathering of those young pioneers who are the road-builders and labor-elite of Palestine, who were gayly disporting themselves with round-dances, songs, jokes and merry calls; some of them possibly a little under the influence of the obligatory four cups of the Passover meal. As we stood for a while, watching their harmless antics, one of the liveliest of the young men pounced upon me, to draw me into their circle; it was done in the pure spirit of fun and jolly good-fellowship; it pleased

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me as a cordial gesture of democratic geniality; but my companion, unreasonably, took fright at it and drew me quickly away.

I was greatly touched by the whole scene; on that charming, moonlit street I was filled with a deep joy. Here was something, an outburst of unrestrained happiness, which was no mere ghetto familiarity, which was more than a freak of youthful ebullition; it appeared to me like the breaking of a dawn, the awakening sense of at-homeness of a people that is coming back to its ancient soil. Prophetic dreams of long-gone centuries were stirring human souls into gradual fulfilment; the yearnings of a thousand Passovers were rising, slowly, but surely, into their day of realization.

In orthodox Judaism the greater holidays, with the exception of the Day of Atonement, are being observed, each, on two days, owing to an uncertainty, centuries ago, of the Hebrew calendar; a punctilious conscientiousness gave rise to the custom and a pious conservatism has clung to it, long after the calendar had been fixed beyond peradventure of the smallest doubt. Accordingly, the Passover meal also has its two evenings, with only slight variations; the second evening being, naturally, of somewhat lesser importance. I had, by

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this time, through a dear friend who combines the vocations of professor, litterateur and archæologist, became friendly with some visitors from Egypt and Bombay and had joined their group at table: in their company I availed myself of the second night's service which the hotel provided for its guests. It was a rather perfunctory performance in charge of a timid young Moroccan rabbi whose rapid, dry delivery robbed the prayers of meaning and the ritual of charm; we were glad, after a time, to escape from its vapid atmosphere and to join some friends in a little adventure which proved a most fascinating experience: we made the round of the walls of Jerusalem by moonlight.

There were some nine or ten of us, almost all young people, who, under the leadership of a bright young friend, son of a well-known educational leader, a native of Jerusalem, were to undertake this interesting scramble, a little venturesome at times, but highly enjoyable, romantic and picturesque throughout. An experience of that sort utterly eludes description, except as the pen of a Pierre Loti might undertake the task.

It involved climbing up and down a lot of steps; it meant occasional crawling and scrambling, sometimes along a narrow ledge with virtually no hold,

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though in most places there were iron rods to help preserve one's balance. We covered a considerable distance, though we were far from making a complete round; at times, for instance by the Damascus gate, the view over the country was extremely beautiful; occasionally there were delicious vistas of the town itself, as it slept, a dream of beauty, in that crystalline air, under the fairy illumination of the queen of night.

I had paid some important visits, partly before, partly during Passover. Returning from the Samaritan Passover at Nablus, I had felt a desire to visit the famous Wailing Wall, a celebrated gathering place for Jewish piety, a relic of the old Temple which has been described and depicted innumerable times. It gathers its largest crowd on Friday evenings; on a Friday evening, accordingly, the day after my arrival, I started out to ask my way, but soon was taken up by a handsome young Jewish policeman who, happening to be at leisure, conducted me all the way. We passed through some Arab and some Jewish bazaars, the first I had seen in Jerusalem; I soon found myself in the presence of what is, though not the oldest, perhaps the best legitimated of the Jewish holy places of Palestine.

It is always a curious sensation to stand for the

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first time in one's life, in the presence of something very famous, very distant, something of which one had heard, of which one had seen reproductions, times without number. There is a risk of disappointment in facing stark realities in a daylight glare; it is a little difficult to adjust oneself, to call up the procession of historic memories, while the hard outlines and prosy colors of reality stare you in the face. I could not collect my thoughts, much less crystallize my emotions, while surrounded by that confusing throng of many costumes and varied types, with the chaotic din of prayerful voices in many keys beating against my ears. I was conscious, principally, of a sense of strangeness, of disorderly chaos; I could neither join in the many-voiced devotions, nor carry away clear impression or warm emotion.

I was glad, hearing some German speech, to find people who could guide me back to the hotel; I had chanced upon a noted colleague, the chief rabbi of Dresden, whose name had long been familiar to me as that of the joint-author of the best existing anthology of Jewish literature; the Wailing Wall had secured for me a very pleasant friend with whom, subsequently, I had frequent occasion for genial converse.

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Some two weeks later I visited the Wailing Wall again, this time in the company of friends who had asked me to join them in the Sabbath-eve service they were to hold there; the impression it made upon me then was overwhelming. I had, by that time, become a little more accustomed to the amazing variety of Jewish types and Jewish costumes in Jerusalem. While the fact had been far from new to me that Jerusalem, beyond all other places of the world, harbors specimens of every existing section of Jewry: of Moroccan, Algerian and Tunisian, of Galician, Hungarian and Rumanian, of Caucasian and Persian, of Yemenite, Kurd and Bokhara Jew, of Levantine and Karaite, I had never been brought into personal touch with all this Babel of tribal diversity; it was after I had become somewhat inured to this kaleidoscopic throng that I was enabled to dive beneath all that motley surface and to take in something of the spirit beneath it.

Here is this large section of an ancient wall, built of huge stones, piled up in layers; the stones show many a fracture, weeds sprouting here and there; the lower part of the wall is covered with irregular scribblings and carvings of names and dates; right in front of it, in every conceivable

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prayerful attitude, are crowded the most intense of its devotees; here and there groups led in prayer by some leader, voices melodious or shrill, rising in song.

The most conspicuous and impressive figures are the tall forms of Galician Chassidim in their fur-caps and long plush robes; among them faces and figures contorted with religious fervor, now gazing ecstatically into the sky, then to the ground, then burying their heads lovingly in some broken niche. Some of these faces remind one of the fever-brained fanatic, others have all the noble beauty of unworldly spirituality. The Chassidim constitute the emotional wing of orthodox Judaism; their prayers and ritual practices are steeped in the mystic consciousness of the Divine Presence and characterized by a conscious and systematic cultivation of cheerfulness.

I observed one of them, a man with a large, full-cheeked, ruddy face, another with haggard cheeks and thin, reddish blond beard, another with a huge bull neck; then, two, very near me, with beautiful noble faces, straight, fine noses with delicate, quivering nostrils. The haggard-cheeked man sometimes covered his eyes and looked frenetic; as they went on, their motions accelerated themselves

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feverishly; to my left there seemed to be, judging by their fez caps, mostly Moroccans and Algerians.

After much diffident hesitation, when some twenty or thirty members of the so-called American congregation had gathered in a bunch and one of them had managed to secure enough wall room to accommodate the *cantor* (a layman volunteer), the latter started the service, singing it with a sweet, high, not very strong tenor voice to which the congregation responded in excellent, well-trained chorus. As he gathered courage, he sang louder; at first our neighbors of different nationalities had tried to drown him out by vociferous devoutness; after a time, whether from pleasure in his voice or from a kindlier feeling, they listened with respect; big-eyed boys with fez caps and long side ringlets seemed to take it in with a dreamy kind of wonderment, as part of some strange world. After a time it was an odd devotional rivalry; at the farther end, to my right, as I faced the wall, there arose on high the quavering voice of some devout reader of hoary years; where we were, about the middle, there was our sweet-voiced singer and his virile chorus; at the left end some boys' choir burst out from time to time.

The American congregation was very proud of

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its achievement and voted to do it again; as for myself, I got a good deal more, this time, out of the dumb, gigantic appeal of the Wailing Wall, with its mutilated, yellow stone blocks. The religious passion of the Chassid seemed to me something real, something red-blooded, intense, pathetic and colorful. To look at him, as you watch his spasmodic hurling of his body, you are inclined to classify him as a benighted fanatic; but as I scanned the noble and kind faces of my two immediate neighbors, I would rather say he was a man to whom God and his soul mean the two things worth cultivating in life.

Another interesting visit of my first days in Palestine was that paid, one afternoon, to the two chief rabbis, one heading the older, Spanish, the other the larger, German community. I felt that the courtesy was due to my colleagues, though an American reform rabbi cannot be altogether certain of cordial reception by his orthodox colleagues, inasmuch as Reform Judaism constitutes a rather radical departure from the accumulated body of Jewish traditional observances and inhibitions. I was fortunate in being accompanied by my archeologist friend whose overkind introductions probably paved my way to special consideration;

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it was highly instructive to contrast these types of religious leadership.

The Spanish chief rabbi, much the elder of the two, was a dignified, ceremonious figure, attired in Oriental costume, guarded, as an inheritance from the Turkish regime, by a *kavass*, a military guard in elaborately decorated uniform; he was surrounded by members of his family and entered into a genial chat; he made the impression of a representative dignitary of pleasing personality and tactful bearing.

The German chief rabbi, a man of middle age, residing in larger, but more plainly furnished quarters, seemed surrounded by throngs of devoted followers, mostly scholars and students, who hung on his lips as, seated at the head of the table, he discoursed learnedly on matters religious. He has a well-earned reputation as an eminent scholar; his discourse was not only learned and thoughtful in matter, but broad and enlightened in spirit.

There was far more than personal gratification in meeting with a cordial reception on the part of both of these eminent colleagues; it signifies a remarkable progress towards the mutual understanding of East and West, of conservatism and of liberalism, that in the citadel of orthodoxy, that in the

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sacred metropolis where religious passion and sectarian factionalism flame at their fiercest, a religious teacher from the extreme West should have extended to him, by his colleagues of the ancient order, the hearty handshake of genuine fellowship.

CHAPTER V

THE VALLEY OF ESDRAELON

IT was Rousseau who claimed that the only way to see a country is to walk; some seventy or eighty years ago Bayard Taylor disclosed to the Americans of his day the unsuspected charm of continental foot-touring; to rush along highways on the wings of an auto is to catch mere glimpses of shifting scenery; to roam from hotel to hotel means to cheat oneself of actual contact with the people, of many chances for closely observing the life of a country.

Had I been a younger man, Palestine more densely populated, my time less limited, I should have greatly preferred, even alone, to measure the country on foot “from Dan to Beersheba.” To pick up one’s company on the road, to stop at any way-side inn or colonist’s cabin, to watch the people at their work, to chat with them of an evening around the family hearth, that would have been the one way to get at some adequate conception of their conditions of existence, of their fitness or inca-

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pacity, their success or failure, of their contentment or restiveness.

But a lone individual whose days of walking prowess belong to the past, must be content to avail himself, for greater distances, of artificial means of locomotion and is only too glad to be offered opportunities, in congenial company, under expert guidance, to explore the land even by methods that threaten to prove superficial and unreliable. I was, accordingly, delighted to join a party of nine friends who were to have a round trip of four days which, starting at Jerusalem, was to take in the so-called Emek (Valley of Jezreel or Esdraelon), to pass through Nazareth to Tiberias, over Safed to Haifa, returning thence to our starting point.

A trip of this kind promised to cover a considerable portion of Palestine; it would introduce us to some of its most typical cities; it would display every variety of scenery: river and lake and sea, mountain and valley, hill and plain, staring wilderness and luxuriant fertility; it would permit us to examine a considerable number of representative colonies; it would allow our guide, my archeologist friend, whose services were tendered from pure friendship, to explain to us the finds of various excavations (some of which he had him-

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self conducted), also the historic facts and cultural conditions which this wreckage from distant ages seemed to disclose.

It was both a valuable opportunity and a pleasant experience. In our party of ten I was the only person that resided neither in Asia nor in Africa; of the others, three were residents of Jerusalem, two of Cairo, two of Bagdad, two of Bombay. As to languages, our three chauffeurs spoke principally Hebrew; all of our party understood English, some five or six could either speak or understand Arabic, three spoke preferably French; the German language, mastered by several of us, hardly ever came into play. There were two married couples, one of them a honeymoon pair, two business associates, a brother and sister. Occasionally the party proved a little unwieldy for rapid progress; inferior roads or casual misunderstandings caused the machines, now and then, to lose track of one another; but on the whole the party stayed together; the weather being mostly in our favor, the excursion proved, to all of us, highly enjoyable, richly instructive and not over-strenuous.

We went, by the straightest roads, over Nablus (Shechem) to Afule, a railroad station with an ex-

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cellent small hotel. We arrived there in the early afternoon for our midday meal; on our way we had passed a number of historic places, such as Anathoth, Jeremiah's native city, Ramathaim Zophim, where Samuel was born, the "Well of Jacob," the "Tomb of Joseph." For some of these and several others we made no stop whatever; to others we gave a few moments, descending from our autos, making hurried, desultory inspections. To any one who has a taste for accuracy and thoroughness, there is something tantalizing, unsatisfying about such sippings of knowledge. The fewest imaginations are vivid enough to recreate a distant past out of its sparse, broken fragments; and there is superadded, in most instances, the pallor of doubt which "sicklies o'er" the identifications of things and places of the hoariest age. It gave us a sort of thrill, near the hill of Samaria, in making the rounds of excavations which had uncovered even pre-Israelitish altars, to see the skeleton foundations of a Jewish residence not much later than the time of David, to examine objects that had belonged to the households of Omri and Ahab, kings of Israel; but when something is pointed out as "the pit of Joseph" skepticism is bound to chill one's interest in dealing

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with so distant a time, with so dubious a spot.

A memorably pleasant sight was Nazareth, as it rose in serene beauty upon its hill, crowned by the darkest and stateliest cypresses we were to see anywhere.

The town of Afule is almost in the center of the so-called Emek, "the valley," affectionately so named, because it represents the largest, almost continuous stretch of Jewish colonizing enterprise in Palestine, the valley that has been transformed by Jewish agricultural labor into a succession of colonies, almost all of them flourishing and successful. We spent a large part of the afternoon in visiting a number of these. In Balfouria, named for Lord Balfour (author of the famous declaration in which, just ten years ago, Great Britain declared its willingness, under certain reservations, to facilitate the Jewish National Home in Palestine), in Balfouria, a colony fathered by the American Zion Commonwealth, we had tea with the daughter of one of the colonists; we made the rounds of homes and fields, here as well as in the "children's village" where some eighty-five orphans, victims of the Ukraine *pogroms*, are being taught, under a system of autonomy, to work in the fields.

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During the four days of our auto trip we managed to visit a goodly number of these colonies; it would be wearisome to attempt a description of each of them, doing justice in every instance to individual features; it will be more practicable to sum up such observations as presented themselves on our rapid survey.

The Jewish colonies in Palestine are administered by different plans which range from individualist effort, through coöperative methods, up to Communist management. Some of the colonies have had assistance from the Jewish National Fund, a Zionist institution, others are fathered by the American Zion Commonwealth, a private corporation; still others rely principally upon the capital brought by the settlers. The very oldest colonies, antedating the Zionist movement itself, have enjoyed the powerful patronage of Baron Edmond de Rothschild, affectionately known in Palestine as the *Nadib*, the man of princely generosity.

Some explanation is here in place as to the agricultural potentialities of Palestine, so far as they present themselves to the dilettante studies and cursory observations of the visiting layman. We are frequently told that Palestine, at one time a remarkably fertile country ("oozing milk and

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honey" is the expressive way the Hebrew Bible puts it) has been laid waste as the arena of countless wars. How a soil can be robbed of fertility by wars is not apt to be clear to the average mind. Battlefields, on the contrary, have been enriched on countless plains by the wholesale slaughter of men and beasts for which they had furnished the playground. Deforestation is the first way to ruin a climate and to destroy the tiller's livelihood; to cut down forests, to waste shade trees and fruit trees by the reckless destructiveness of war, is to render a country almost uninhabitable, substituting for the regular rainfall a mere alternation of spring floods with summer droughts. In the course of centuries the glorious cedars which once covered the great mountain range of the Lebanon have shrunk to the proportions of a tiny grove; the Turkish government, for many years, laid a tax on every newly planted tree (as it did on all repairs and new constructions), thus systematically choking off every timid stirring of progress or enterprise.

In such a neglected, step-fathered country, clear pond and limpid brook degenerate into stagnant pool and mephitic swamp; where no windshields protect a coast against the incursions of sand-

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storms, its valuable soil becomes covered out of sight by deep layers of sand, until it changes to the semblance of a desert; where rocky slopes on sunlit hills were once transformed by loving labor into vine-clad terraces, the bald, hard granite, after the artificial soil has been washed away, presents the deceptive appearance of sterile, irredeemable barrenness.

The Jewish pioneer has come to this Cinderella of countries with the hope that he might enthrone her on that eminence of fruitfulness and beauty which wrested admiration even from the grim Roman invader of whom one of the later Roman historian relates with pride, how “through those fragrant groves of palms and balm trees he bore aloft the Roman ensign.”

Even prior to the Zionist movement the so-called “Cherishers of Zion,” daring young enthusiasts, recruited from East-European Jewry, gave battle to the swamp and wrested a costly triumph, paid in many a precious human life, from malaria-infested regions. In our day these swamps are being drained by modern methods, through underground clay pipes, so as to avoid breeding the anopheles mosquito by open drainage; stagnant moisture and consequent disease have been successfully fought

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by an importation from distant Australia of the eucalyptus tree, which the Arabs call the Jew tree, because it has been of such signal aid to the cause of Jewish colonization.

There is to me something uncanny about this exotic creature from the realm of treedom. That, from the Antipodes, out of the youngest of continents, there should come to the mother country of man's faith, in the abysses of her desolation, a tree that is to the swamp what the camel is to the desert, a tree of boundless thirst and amazingly rapid growth, a tree whose roots at the same time greedily drink up all the moisture and kill out all the weeds as they spread abroad their powerful network, a tree that shoots up into the air with strong, tall, almost barkless trunk and with lithe, firm, erect branches (excellent supports for tender orange saplings), a tree which in two or three years forms a dense forest with hard, dry soil underneath, a tree by no means unpleasant to the sight, but which always, as the breezes sough through its foliage, seems something strange, singular, outlandish—it stands to me for one of the romances of this long awaited redemption, it is something that must always constitute a quaint chapter in that whole tale of paradoxes and surprises.

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The colonists plant these trees and find them their most powerful allies against malaria; the eucalyptus furnishes all sorts of other helps in the way of fuel, building accessories, etc. The Arab had to do his planting on the hills, to save his life from the breath of miasma; the Jew can fearlessly descend into the swamp and bring it back again into healthfulness, fertility and beauty.

What crops do the Jewish colonists plant in that valley of Jezreel (which means "God will sow"), the valley of the river Kishon, a valley whose plains and hillsides, beginning at Mount Carmel, and ending with the hills of Lower Galilee, have furnished battlefields to Barak and Gideon, to Saul and Jehu, to Maccabean and to Roman, to Saladin and Napoleon? Mostly, of course, those that are proving most readily marketable. A great deal of vegetable truck is being produced here for city consumption. In Afule we were told that the railroad is furnishing a special night train twice a week to carry the produce to Jerusalem; other places were selling their wheat to the neighboring flour mills. In places farther north we saw fields of tobacco and went into the working rooms where the leaf was stripped and prepared for shipment; we saw but few mulberry trees, occasional patches

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of bananas (the Palestinian banana is small and of unattractive appearance, but very sweet); olives, vines, fig trees appear here and there; corn is planted for feed, occasionally one sees fields of lentils, reminding one of Esau's after-hunt breakfast. There is some bee farming and the honey seems uncommonly delicious. Here is one affinity between Greek and Hebrew culture: the honey of Hymettus and Hybla furnished a metaphor for eloquence, while the honey of the Holy Land tokened sweetness and pleasure. I have seen red clover blossoms in Palestine which, in size, color and beauty, surpassed anything in my previous experience.

Certain fruit trees appear to be unpopular in Palestine, largely by reason of marketing difficulties. I was told near the coast, some weeks later, that lemons do not pay, though they yield, as I could see, very abundantly; they cannot compete with the cheap Italian lemon. Pomegranate and fig seem to stand in low esteem; the St. John's bread, a magnificent, wide-spreading tree of which I saw some gigantic, venerable specimens, is cultivated mostly for its shade and for cattle feed; the date palm, to my surprise, was spoken of contemptuously, because its fruit, very much

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like our own persimmon, is allowed to wallow in the dust; I saw, near the coast, almond trees going to waste, to be replaced by oranges.

We visited the colonists in their homes and chatted with them, with men and women, with teachers and leaders; many had gone to Jerusalem for the Passover week and work was somewhat in abeyance; we met with a courteous reception everywhere, especially in consideration of our archeologist friend who had furnished names for a number of the colonies, had delivered lectures in many of them and was highly respected for his scholarship and personality. Every colony had its synagogue and school; one or the other was too poor to engage a teacher, a lack which appeared to distress the people greatly. The dwellings were clean and orderly, often neat and tastily furnished, sometimes, however, bare of floors and not adequately protected against cold or rain.

Several of these colonies harbored high-grade mechanics; some of these had beaten the sword into the ploughshare by turning war armaments into agricultural helps. A few of the leaders, mostly young men of unusual vigor and of virile personalities, had little libraries; some of the colonists had been peasants in Europe, as we found

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to be the case principally in one Transylvanian colony which was quite prosperous.

The colonists, men and women, were plainly dressed; they presented, almost without exception, a remarkably healthy appearance; fine complexions abounded; of the babies and children a considerable proportion was strikingly beautiful. Two children linger in my memory whose beauty charmed all of us: a little blond boy of the angelic type, son of the colony teacher; he bore the characteristic name: Yig'al, meaning: "He will redeem," and another, sturdily handsome little fellow whose father was the head of a Communist colony and who had been named Elasar, which means: "God has helped." A third boy bore the name Ben Zion, son of Zion.

While our round through the colonies had proved highly encouraging, presenting an exhibit of hardy conquest, of splendid progress, the promise of expanding prosperity, of a new breed of enlightened, patriotic tillers of the old soil, we were somewhat saddened, by coming, towards the end of the trip, upon a colony of Chassidim which was in the course of dissolution, partly because the soil had not redeemed its first promise, partly because the colonists, owing to some dispute, had lost control

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of their financial resources. These people were not only in great confusion and mental distress, but literally upon the verge of starvation; they presented their side of the case (their rabbi leader was absent, pleading with the central authorities) with much calmness and plausibility; when we offered them assistance, they gratefully, but firmly, declined to accept charity; they only entreated us to plead personally on their behalf with the authorities who were considering both sides. I met, later on, an influential New York friend whose sympathies had been similarly aroused and whose proffered gift had also been declined; both of us were assured, in answer to our pleas at headquarters, that these people would be properly cared for.

But despite this saddening incident at the close, all of us felt (and my friend from Cairo, a prominent lawyer, was able to judge from a considerable amount of experience as an amateur planter) that the difficult experiment of restoring a people to its soil, of turning townsmen into farmers, natives of the Occident into citizens of the Orient, the experiment of exchanging ghetto confinement for outdoor toil, was in a fair way towards achieving success, on a larger and larger scale, in due course of time.

It is an experiment which must contend against

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stubborn obstacles and towering difficulties; it is an endeavor which seemed ridiculously hopeless ten years ago and which has managed to overcome opposition, more and more, as it has gathered momentum under the favor of the march of history. It is a national venture utterly without a parallel in the past which has had the advantage, an advantage not very apparent, but solidly real, of starting with a diminutive handful of undiscourageable idealists.

We were shown, in the early part of our trip, the very spot, still called En Harod, as it is in the Bible, where, at God's command, Gideon reduced his army of 22,000 men to a paltry 300 with whom to subdue the Midianites. These 300 were the men who were so keen to leap upon the enemy that they disdained to kneel down to the spring and drink at leisure, but dipped up the water in their hands to drink. It is a lesson which the Bible repeats in many keys: God's victories are gained by the spirit of the few, not by the herding of the many.

CHAPTER VI

TIBERIAS, SAFED AND HAIFA.

THE valley of Esdraelon and its tier of colonies had, on the whole, formed the main object of our four days' auto trip; all of us were warmly interested in the success of Jewish colonization; some four people in our party were considering Palestinian agriculture from the angle of financial investment; the heroic struggle of our people for a new rootage in the ancient soil held a strong personal fascination for every one of us.

Yet it was a pleasure trip on the face of it and one of the outstanding impressions it left with us was that of scenic loveliness in endless profusion and variety, such as mere words are altogether powerless to convey. At the risk of complete failure, however, I ought to make some attempt at describing what we saw.

I have referred to the statuesque beauty of the little town of Nazareth, which enjoys a location of special distinction, as its houses and little gardens mount a rather steep slope. At Afule, where we

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had our first night's stop, the little hotel affords from the roof a splendid view over the valley; a good part of it, unfortunately for the early riser, was shrouded in the mists of the morning-dawn. In some of the colonies, for instance in the one named K'far Yechezkel (village of Ezekiel), the colonists proudly called our attention to the magnificent view they had of hills and valley; as we rose towards Nazareth, and, again, as we descended, the serpentine road had afforded continuous delight, one scene giving way to another, now the rich green of the plains of Naphtali, again the bluish hills of Galilee.

After we passed the Canna of gospel fame we came upon our first orange orchard; the blossoms were gone and the fruit was not yet visible; we happened here to observe an Arab who had harnessed ox and ass together in defiance of a well-known Mosaic injunction. Every once in a while the shifting mountain-shapes with their changing hues would draw cries of admiration, as shreds of cloud were seen drifting about them; from a height we caught our first glimpse of the "harp-sea" as it is called in Hebrew: Lake Genesareth, a mirror of light steel blue, clad in trembling hazes in a delicate beauty all its own.

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The three Palestinian lakes: Dead Sea, Gennesareth, Merom, have clear-marked individualities which it puzzles the observer to discriminate by way of description; very much as, in Switzerland, one is strongly impressed with the diversities in color, type and environment between the Lake of Constance and the Lake of Geneva, between Zurich Lake and Cantonal Lakes, Neufchatel Lake and Thun or Brienz Lake and, yet, finds himself unable to clothe these divergencies in adequate words.

Tiberias proved to be a very interesting city with a variety of attractions. Being situated in a depression beneath sea level of over six hundred feet and largely under mountain shelter, it has a mild climate, warmer than that of Jaffa, though not nearly as hot as the region around Jericho. The lake which, unlike the Dead Sea, furnishes excellent drinking water and abounds in fish of many species, derives much picturesqueness from the mountains which enclose it; sunsets are richer in coloring and moonlit nights have added charm, as the glowing mountain-hues of the evening-dawn or the frowning mountain-shapes of the night-hours mirror themselves in its glassy calm. Yet the little lake, we were told, can be dangerously stormy when sudden gusts whip it into waves of regular

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ocean-size; in ancient times it was surrounded by prosperous towns and villages and enlivened by much navigation.

As we approached Tiberias, we passed a pretty suburb, Kiryath Sh'muel, "town of Samuel," named for Sir Herbert Samuel, the First High Commissioner under the English mandate; for some distance we had observed much basalt rock which, in this neighborhood, furnishes a handsome and durable building material. The region is largely volcanic, with much fertile lava soil. The city has a majority of Jewish inhabitants and is governed by a Jewish mayor; it has electric lighting under the concession of Phineas Rutenberg, which has begun to exploit the water-power of the Jordan river. There are some sixteen Jewish hotels; at the postoffice Hebrew is the vernacular.

After the midday meal we set out at once to view the important excavations above the city. Marble pillars lying about, some remains of artistic mosaic floors, fragments of an aqueduct, here and there a sarcophagus, witness to the fact that in Greek and Roman times, Tiberias was an important city; in the lower part of town there are large portions of an ancient wall. We visited two Jewish seminaries, under Spanish and German

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auspices; we sought out, as we took the southward road, the grave of the famous Rabbi Meir, "the wonder-worker," a favorite resort for Jewish pilgrimage, where, on behalf of the superstitious, prayers are recited for a consideration; we were too indolent to honor the memory of heroic Rabbi Akiba, the spiritual head of the Bar Kochba rebellion under Emperor Hadrian, by climbing some few hundred feet up the hill to visit his grave.

Not far from these graves we came upon the celebrated hot springs which, in ancient times, had much to do with spreading the fame of Tiberias. The provisions for their use are as yet rather primitive; much of the water is allowed to go to waste; there are two individual tubs for patrons and a small pool for the poor people. There are five springs, containing mostly sulphur, iron and magnesia. The water is so hot (some 150 degrees Fahrenheit) that it has to be tempered.

We passed some private plantations (mostly orange culture), had pointed out to us a colony of Jewish fishermen (there are two groups of them) and ended the day by visiting our first communist colony, Dagania, a colony fifteen years old, which we inspected rather thoroughly and found in excellent order. The western side of the Tiberias lake

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harbors a cluster of Jewish colonies, most of them in thriving condition. Climate, soil and landscape have attracted a number of well-to-do Jewish people, some of whom own plantations with pretty homes. The well known Sir Alfred Mond, British chemical manufacturer (now Lord Melchett), is said to plan the building of a luxurious villa in the neighborhood.

We were disappointed of a rather novel treat we had planned for the evening: witnessing a performance of the opera "La Tosca." We had seen it advertised in Hebrew placards, as we entered the city; most of us had never heard grand opera sung in Hebrew; it would be a new sensation to hear such bursts of tragic passion in the venerable garb of the Bible tongue. Unfortunately the Prima Donna pleaded indisposition and the performance had to be postponed. Some of us, then, would have liked to substitute a boat-ride on the moonlit lake; it would have been a delightful memory to preserve; but there was no suitable boat to be had.

Not to be cheated, however, of something personally memorable to associate with Tiberias, one of the venerable historic centers of rabbinic learning where, at one time, the Sanhedrin held its sessions, where the six volume law-code of the

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Mishna was completed and the Jerusalem Talmud compiled, I resolved to try its famous hot waters, though, as we had to leave early the next morning, the little adventure necessitated rising at an unearthly hour and held no likely promise of a comfortable experience.

Rising at four o'clock, I had a rather weird walk of some twenty minutes in the dim light, along the lonely road from the hotel to the springs. In the half-lit air the white-clad figures of women filling their pitchers at the lake had something ghost-like; men, saddling donkeys, were bringing early wares to the market; on the hills the goats were stirring where Bedouins had pitched their black tents. There was a slight drizzle; hills and mountains were clothed in purple hues, subdued by mists; Palestine's snow-covered mountain-summit, the Hermon, was hidden out of sight even later, when, as I walked back, the sun had risen.

The bathing facilities were, naturally, a little crude, but clean and not uncomfortable; the sensation seemed strange; I was warned not to prolong the bath, as it might prove weakening. I felt that it was worth some loss of sleep to have tasted the experience. There was some difficulty in making myself understood by the Arab attendants, but

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most of them command a smattering of Hebrew.

Before we left Tiberias we paid a brief visit to the modest grave of the great thinker and scholar of the Judeo-Spanish period, Moses Maimonides, of whom it was said that "from Moses unto Moses there was none equal unto Moses." If the lawgiver Moses spurned the very idea of tomb or monument, it cannot be said that Moses the philosopher boasts a tomb that could, by any stretch of meaning, be called pretentious.

We were entering upon the most mountainous portion of our route, on our way to Upper Galilee where, in the ancient city of Safed, we were to reach our northernmost point. During the World War this city was so difficult of access that 2500 Jews died here of starvation, there being no possibility of any aid reaching them; many others had fled, foreseeing the danger.

Leaving Tiberias we lost our party, owing to a misunderstanding with regard to roads; a ferry-boat our auto tried proved unmanageable; getting back to the main road the party was reunited at the ancient Capernaum of New Testament fame (K'far Nahum, Nahum's village), where our archæologist, with the assistance of a very affable Dominican father (that order being in possession),

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showed and explained to us some highly interesting Jewish ruins, mostly remains of ancient synagogues. A superb alley of tall date-palms led to them, other beautiful trees, acacias, pepper trees adorned the adjacent ground.

There were pillars, sarcophagi, friezes and capitals; the fragments were laid out in careful order for convenient examination; there were some excellent mosaic floors (one with a fine representation of a peacock) covered with sawdust to protect them from injury. Our archæologist friend furnished highly interesting explanations, calling attention to the many Jewish symbols, such as the shield of David, the star of Solomon, the ram's horn, the candlestick, pomegranate, bunches of grapes, the hand gesture of the priest's blessing. Along with these were Ionian columns, reminding of the dominant influence of classical architecture. It was of particular importance to know that the "Shield of David" (two triangles crossed) as a Jewish symbol, dates back to far earlier ages than is generally assumed.

We wound our way through the hills; now and then we passed through gusts of rain; as we climbed higher, we entered into a cloud and quickly above it; as we rose still higher we saw, for a brief time,

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both lakes, Genesareth and Merom, the latter the merest grayish-blue shadow, a small, pale sheet of water. We passed the road that leads to Meron; special Jewish pilgrimages, we were told, come here on the thirty-second day after the first day of Passover to pay homage to the great mystic, Rabbi Simon ben Yochai, who is buried near Meron.

Safed is a very ancient, highly venerated city, a great historic seat of piety and learning; in some ways it is the quaintest and most oriental-looking of all the Palestinian towns we saw. Safed has an even higher altitude than Jerusalem and more unmistakably the appearance of a city on a hilltop; the houses rise amphitheatrically above one another, the roof of one a front yard for the next higher one, so that the houses look like huge steps; many of the streets descend in broad, much worn steps, with a central gutter for surface drainage. There is an abundance of quaintly designed balconies, most of the homes are white or of a light blue. Orange trees were still blossoming here, spring being backward at this altitude.

We visited two very ancient synagogues; one of them exhibits interesting relics of that most eminent of Kabbalists, Rabbi Isaac Luria. It was alluring, almost a temptation, to learn that from

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Safed it is only a three hours' ride to Damascus.

Here and in other places, not only in Palestine, but in Egypt, one discovers that American business has made an utterly unpicturesque contribution to the lower strata of oriental life in the shape of the gasoline tin-can which is often used by the women in place of the shapely earthenware which used to be employed for water carrying and the like. The tin-can as a vessel, corrugated iron as wall and roof, corrugated paper as a conveyor have given the foreigner a rather sinister notion as to the artistic refinement of American taste, at least, as exhibited in some of our commercial products.

We began to discover that our chauffeurs were surprisingly human; their recommendations of hotels for stopping-places, their warnings against "bad roads" had all sorts of backgrounds. They favored some hotels because they were partial to the food they served; if they were urging us towards some one stopping-place in preference to another, it came out, after a time, that some chauffeur's sweetheart happened to live nearby. They were, however, bright, capable men, minutely and accurately informed, not only about the roads, but about the history, present ownership and general conditions of the properties we passed.

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While we were making a short stay at Nazareth, an Arab woman nursing a baby, both of them pitifully ragged, came begging to our autos. A policeman at once roughly ordered her away, warning us that such people are greatly given to stealing from tourist machines.

The trip down the mountains was made under clear skies and far more rapidly. It retraced a large part of our former route, it led past some important colonies like Nahalal: from some of the higher points we soon were gladdened with the sight of the blue Mediterranean, glittering in the sun, of the Bay of Acco with the city of Haifa forming a horseshoe around its southern end, of lovely, tree-clad Mount Carmel lifting its head above the white, peaceful harbor-town. The so-called valley of Acco which we saw from the heights as we passed westward, has only been touched by Jewish colonization at its western end; Haifa itself is surrounded both by Jewish colonies and by some of the most important Palestinian factories. The hotel here approaches closely to modern standards; other hotels are being erected which promise to correspond altogether to American requirements.

We spent a restful evening in the most beautiful

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location we had yet encountered. The hotel is built about midway on the slope of Mount Carmel, with the sea visible on two sides. It is surrounded by pines and box trees; there is much orange culture in the neighborhood. Building plots here command high prices, despite the depression in the real estate situation at Tel Aviv, farther south; a suburb, "Glory of Carmel," is gradually building up. Haifa has possibly the most beautiful site of any city in Palestine; it reminds, with its horseshoe bay, with its contrasts of wooded hill, white town and blue sea, somewhat of Naples, though Naples, of course, has a number of romantic accessories in its matchless vicinage and its architectural monuments, besides the advantage of its splendid harbor and advanced type of civilization.

The next morning gave us our first view of Mount Hermon, Palestine's tallest summit, covered with everlasting snow; it was an impressive sight in the clear air; there are not many countries as small as Palestine that include, at one and the same time, a hoary snow-summit and a phenomenal depression, like that of the Dead Sea where the climate reminds of the tropics; that depression, in fact, is claimed to be the lowest on the entire surface of the globe.

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We spent part of the morning in visiting the Haifa Polytechnicum, a technical academy conducted in the Hebrew vernacular with modern teaching apparatus and excellent workshops; its courtyard boasts the deepest well in Palestine which supplies the neighborhood. We also paid a visit to the Portland cement factory, a very large concern with an output of over 70,000 tons a year. I had met the proprietor, a Russian Jew who had been identified, before the war, with the oil well fields near the Caspian Sea, also a nephew of his, a typical *Chalutz* (pioneer), as well as another nephew who manages the factory; it is said to be as modern and up-to-date a plant as one could find in any country; the buildings were put up by Jewish labor; the factory closes for Jewish Sabbaths and holidays; it has been steadily expanding through the growing demand for its products. We had no time for making similar rounds in the cigarette factory or the flour mills.

Favored by cool, bright weather, we re-crossed the length of the flourishing Jezreel valley, stopping for a picnic lunch at Afule; as we reached a higher spot on the road, we caught a swift glimpse of Cæsarea and the sea. We reached home for the evening meal.

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Somewhere between Afule and Jerusalem a trifling incident occurred which is susceptible of more than one explanation but which, in all probability, had little or no significance. The roads were alive with people returning from work, mostly Arabs of the lower classes; near some village or other, just as we were to pass a wooden bridge, some fifteen or twenty young people, as we were approaching, ranged themselves on both sides for some purpose or other, we could not imagine what it might be. As we were swiftly passing, we heard a few thuds against our autos and some small objects got in: they had been throwing thistles at us, whether in mischief or in fun we could not tell; as no one was struck, we preferred to attach no importance to the incident. In poor countries the common people often harbor a sort of grudge against the automobile and its supposedly wealthy occupants: on the other hand, it may simply have emanated from a mischievous spirit of fun.

CHAPTER VII

JERUSALEM

OUT of the month I spent in Palestine I passed some eighteen days in Jerusalem. When one visits such old historic cities as London, Paris, Rome, one may rush around all he pleases, cover a good deal of ground, whether in a few days or a few weeks; if he is honest with himself, he will have to admit, at the end of it all, that he knows little or nothing, either of the historic memorials of these cities or of their treasures of art or of the life that is peculiar to them. All that one can do is to sip at a few supremely famous or uniquely splendid things, to snatch swift impressions of national traits, of a cultural atmosphere; but there is a sense of defeat in one's realization that an acquaintance measured by days and weeks, instead of years, means but a touching of the outer fringe in a vast treasure-house of historic spots, of masterpieces of art, of national achievements.

These cities, however, and some others like them, are the homes of vast populations, the political and

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cultural centers of powerful nations; they are now, or else have been at some not too remote period, seats of world-wide empire; Jerusalem is a mere town of some seventy or eighty thousand inhabitants, a town whose days of glory and of a modest measure of dominion belong to the distant past, a town poor in wealth, reft of all power, rich in little beyond memories and associations, but rich, above every other place in the world, in shrines of sanctity which command the reverence, respectively, of the three faiths that divide between them the believing hosts of modern civilization.

On the impressionable globe-trotter and the guide-conducted tourist, Jerusalem, in their few days of rushing from one sacred spot to another, may possibly make a powerful religious impression. The life with which they come in contact is that of tourist hotel and tourist shop; they are fed on sacred history and sacred objects; Jerusalem is to them at best no more nor less than a supreme object-lesson in sacred history.

But when one has had a glimpse, again and again, of the medley of religions, nationalities and languages which is harbored by this matchless town, when one knows how large a part of its people subsists on outside charity and how large a

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part on tourist revenue; when one learns, here and there, of all the different kinds of friction, religious and sectarian, national and linguistic, political and administrative, commercial and social, which now are slumbering beneath the surface and again threatening to break forth under provocation, when one becomes aware of the frightful poverty of which the tourist is kept in blissful ignorance (there is comparatively little public begging in Jerusalem) one carries away an impression, not so much of supreme holiness, but rather of puzzling confusion, of a most intricate, because a highly complicated problem. What a certain popular pun claims with regard to all Palestine seems peculiarly true about Jerusalem: it is so kaleidoscopic, because everybody collides with everybody else.

Jerusalem is quite modern in some ways, there is a good deal of building going on; here a vacant lot stares at you which has been cleared for some new structure; there you see ambitious foundations to serve for some new hotel; in the suburbs there is much stirring life and fresh color; but you come, even in the city center, amid gray antiquity, upon modern edifices and saucy new styles. In the streets the so-called "garry's," one horse or two-

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horse vehicles, generally of rather ancient vintage, vie with automobiles of almost all degrees of shabbiness and splendor; efficient traffic officers in smart uniforms direct the busy traffic which, in the narrow streets, has a tendency to get stowed. In the main streets the tourist shop with its antiques and curios of doubtful genuineness is the conspicuous feature; Hebrew placards challenge your attention and a movie theatre invites your patronage; but everywhere religious and philanthropic structures dominate the horizon.

While the Jews form the majority of the population and have their proportion of synagogues and charities, they make, architecturally, a very poor showing, due to the meagerness of their financial resources and the seriousness of their problems of destitution. The most imposing of edifices belong to the Russians, Italians, Armenians, Germans, French, to churches and convents; every other denomination commands churches and mosques the interiors of which glitter with gold and sparkle with gems; the most venerable Jewish sanctuary in Jerusalem is a naked fragment of ancient wall, war-scarred, scribble-covered and weed-overgrown, the mute and hoary witness of anguished lamentation and of unconquerable hope.

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But through the streets there surges a motley throng which bewilders the visitor with its blending of rags and splendor, of dinginess and brilliant color, of dignity and abjectness. One passes through these crowds day after day and one cannot help wishing that he had the key to all this variety of nationalities and types; but even such a comparatively easy distinction as that between the *Fellah*, the Arab peasant, and the Bedouin, the desert wanderer, is apt to elude one, despite repeated inquiries.

Jerusalem, it has been mentioned heretofore, has the distinction among the Jewish centers of the world, of harboring the most diversified of Jewish populations; there is hardly a Jewish tribe or clan in any corner of the world but has its congregation, no matter how small, in some nook or cranny of the ancient metropolis; probably such extremely remote offsprings as the virtually extinct Chinese Jews or the poverty-stricken black Jews of Abyssinia, or the cave-dwelling Jews of north-western Africa are failing of representation; but one meets here quaint-costumed and odd-featured descendants of Jacob from the ends of southeastern Europe, from northern Africa, southwestern and central Asia, such as hardly ever find their way

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even to New York City which probably ranks next to Jerusalem in the tribal diversity of its Jewish population.

One disappointment which I carried away, not unexpectedly, from Jerusalem was that I had neither the time nor the strength to cope, as I should have liked, with this fascinating puzzle of the Jewish tribal spectrum of costumes and physiognomies. I tried, to the extent of my opportunities, to visit some of the special quarters; on one occasion I was highly gratified when I actually succeeded in identifying one picturesquely costumed gentleman as belonging to Bokhara Jewry; but again and again I saw Kurdish and Persian Jews, Caucasian and Levantine, Moroccan and Algerian Jews, without ever learning to recognize costumes, far less to classify physiognomies. Some of the physiognomies, of course, were incredibly removed from any resemblance whatever to the features which the Western world is accustomed to associate with Jewish types, whether those idealized or those caricatured. More than once, in visiting classes in various Jerusalem schools, I had to admit that I should never have known their constituency to be Jewish, had I not been apprised of the fact.

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I paid some very interesting visits in the search for contact with the diversities of Jewish life in Jerusalem. Some of these will be more properly dealt with under special headings, such as art, education, charity. One such visit was in the company of a young friend who edits a Hebrew daily in Jerusalem, an able writer and eloquent speaker in a number of languages, who has been in New Orleans and may visit here again this winter. The first Saturday afternoon I spent in Jerusalem he took me to a meeting of young people whom he was to address on current issues. The attendance was so large that he had to speak from the roof, while the audience, except a few of us, was standing in the courtyard. It was, at the inception of my stay, a highly encouraging experience. To meet these hundreds of young men and young women, many of them of that unique class of pioneers who had abandoned their university training for the rough manual labor of farming, road work, and the building trades, to observe their democratic bearing, their cordial converse, their intense enthusiasm, was to enter into a world bubbling over with youth and fervor. There were some brief preliminaries belonging to the business of the organization; the address had just the frank, direct,

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buoyant temper which is sure to win such an audience. It was the first time that I had the privilege of listening to a speaker who had the right to claim Hebrew as his veritable mother-tongue, as the accustomed language of his childhood home, the language which had furnished him with the first stammerings and lispings of baby talk. It was a strange pleasure, altogether different from that of reading literary New-Hebrew, to hear the revived and modernized language as it fell from the lips of a virile personality who wielded it at will as the natural vehicle of clear-cut conviction and warm emotion. My friend had the excellent judgment not to call upon me to speak; my labored effort to force the old tongue to my bidding would have sounded painfully awkward after the masterful eloquence with which he had set forth his reading of the situation, of its menace and its promise.

I made two attempts to see some of the Jewish quarters of the various nationalities and how they lived. Our archæologist friend, at the butt-end of a busy day, took us to the quarters of the Bokhara Jews, as I had expressed the wish of seeing these and other odd populations in their homes. It was a most unsatisfactory visit; we saw a few people on the streets, some in the Bokhara costume, others

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in plain garbs; we peeked, for some moments, from the sidewalk into a small basement synagogue where a service was going on; having no acquaintance among these people and not wishing to let our curiosity intrude upon their privacy, we carried away none but vague and superficial impressions.

I was more fortunate when a young Hungarian rabbi whom I have known for some years and whose folks reside in Jerusalem, asked me to pay them a visit at their home. It proved an interesting and enjoyable visit. These people reside in the Hungarian quarter and are among the beneficiaries of a pious foundation which affords modest homes to worthy families at a very nominal rent. Each residence has some three or four rooms of a good size; a gallery runs along the rear with a view upon a clean courtyard; the place is quiet, the rooms are cozy and homelike; people live here in a self-respecting poverty which is not without its prized little family heirlooms and modest possessions. Scholars and persons of marked piety are here preferred tenants; these good people to whom a visit from an American rabbi is a nine days' wonder dispensed a charming hospitality. There is a number of these Jewish foundations in Jerusalem,

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some of them several decades old, scattered in various points of town.

I visited the bazaars a number of times, partly as I passed through on my way to some older part of the city, partly as I went shopping with friends who mastered Arabic and were adepts at the difficult knack of dealing with the Oriental trader. Not only in Palestine, but equally in Egypt (and almost as much so in Italy) the purchaser must never accept the dealer's first price which is sure to be far higher than the article ought to sell for; the dealer expects to have a prolonged battle of haggling in which either his vehement lying or the customer's cold persistence will win in the end; it is an accomplishment which some dispositions are precluded from ever acquiring.

I found these bazaars less dingy and malodorous, more fascinatingly vivid and many-hued than I had expected. The Jewish bazaars are rigidly closed on Saturdays. Here you get the old Orient at its most typical coloring. You pick your way carefully along narrow, cobbled streets, many of which lead down in steps; walking is difficult, partly because the narrow space is swarming with crowds of people whose variety of costumes and faces you do not wish to miss, even though the

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stones are slippery and the ground uneven; partly because many of the wares are displayed on the ground, because donkeys with packs bulging on both sides and carriers with heavy burdens will take up almost the whole width of the passage. Storeroom is often the merest hole in the wall; one sees no doors to the shops and dark depths loom behind; there is, of course, much noise, but the Arab trader is both courteous and patient. One is warned to beware of pickpockets in the big crowds, but I heard of no actual experience of that kind. A Jerusalem lady of my acquaintance whose shopping talents helped out my ignorance, assured me that there is very little real stealing or actual dishonesty; when I went marketing with her one morning, after she had made her selections from various stands, she picked out a boy from the several who presented themselves with baskets to carry her marketing home; she trusted him without knowing his name or address, simply because he looked efficient to her; she never misses any of her purchases which are delivered in this haphazard manner, though the boys are not attached to any particular shop.

One comes upon all sorts of surprises in one's wanderings about the city. My archæologist friend,

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one Saturday afternoon, worked a fairy change for me. The day being rather warm (nights are invariably cool in Jerusalem with its altitude of about 2,400 feet, but afternoons, towards the latter spring, are very hot at times, especially when the hot winds, the *Hamsin*, are abroad), he asked me to go to a garden-restaurant, almost in the immediate neighborhood of the hotel at which I was staying. It was like being transported by magic out of the hot, crowded street into the cool, quiet shade, where people sat in a bright, amply shaded garden sipping refreshing drinks while listening to some delightful band as it discoursed modern music. There was nothing to remind one of the outer world; music, uniforms and dresses, furnishings, food and drink were all of our Western world.

By accident I chanced, at another time, upon something even more characteristically occidental, a simon-pure American product, perhaps the last which one would have looked for in Jerusalem. Having bought, at the exhibition of a Jerusalem artist, a pen-and-ink sketch which had not been delivered at the promised time, I tried to look up the artist's address and was directed by an Arab boy to the house of the lady who had, most generously, loaned the hall rent-free to the young man

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who was far from over-burdened with this world's wealth. I met a very gracious woman, owner of one of the most beautiful homes in Jerusalem, who, when told I was a rabbi, insisted on my coming to her parlor to answer some questions of a religious import. In the brief time I was able to spare I learned that she was an ardent Christian Scientist who had written a number of pamphlets on the subject; as a souvenir of the visit she presented me with a tastily printed Jerusalem edition of Mrs. Eddy's "Science and Health," published by her, surely an unlooked-for American invasion by one of the youngest of religions into the mother-city of faiths.

While Jerusalem is a city built upon hills, a city with many sloping streets and some steep declivities, its great age and its many sieges have piled up stratum over stratum, so that many streets run almost level for considerable distances. Yet one is reminded of the altitude again and again in more than one way. During the hot portion of the day the shady side of the street is surprisingly cool; at nightfall the temperature drops perceptibly. More or less all over Palestine the air seems to be of an unusual limpidity and transparency, so that distances are deceptive and difficult to size

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up; in Jerusalem this phenomenon is particularly striking. You are shown, from some eminence or open location, a body of light-blue water framed by hills, the Dead Sea; you imagine it must be right at hand, a mere walk; it is twenty miles away as the crow flies; you see some taller summits beyond it, the mountains of Moab; you would judge it an easy hike to reach them; it is a distance of fifty miles.

The view is one of which the people may well be proud. You visit in some suburb like Talpioth; after the owner of the little cottage has shown you over his house and his garden, he leads you to the front and bids you revel in that dream-like landscape, a mingling of colors and a grouping of forms such as one can never gaze his fill of. It is a priceless privilege, an inexhaustible "pasture for the eyes," as the German idiom puts it, to have such a rich symphony of deep-toned hues as part of the charm of your front garden. To many of these people it is one of the rewards and one of the tonics in lives that have paid costly tributes of sacrifice on behalf of their beloved Palestine.

There are quite other charms that belong to the hours after sunset. I was leaving a crowded reception one evening, to walk home through the quiet

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streets with friends. Suddenly one of them, the leading woman in Jewish Palestine work, nudged me, saying "Look up!" I beheld a phenomenon of the beauty of which I had heard and read: the star-lit sky of a fragrant spring night in Jerusalem; it was radiantly, inexpressibly beautiful. The deep, yet bright, blue, the fresh, sparkling starlight, the multitudinous sprinkle of star-dust—it made a picture more richly joyous, more vivid and more intense in its contrasts than I can remember ever having seen. Unwittingly there came to one's mind the Psalmist's words: "The heavens are telling the glory of God." The same trite word, "heaven," may mean a staring expanse of a dull grayish-blue to one man, a resplendent canopy of sparkling dots against a rich-hued background of purplish blue to another.

The last evening I spent in Jerusalem left a similar sky-picture with me, but not as a single, fascinated gaze, but as a prolonged reveling in the beauty of balmy peace. It was a moonlit night this time: a party of us were spending the evening on the balcony of a hospitable residence where we had been the guests of an American lady who, after a successful professional career, is devoting her rare gifts and splendid courage to the cause of the

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Palestinian woman, regardless of race or faith. The scene reminded one unwittingly of what one had read or seen of Italian summer nights. The home was on a quiet street where one seemed utterly remote from all excitement or stress; the balcony was surrounded by fine, large trees in all the glory of spring verdure from which, now and then, some sweet bird-voice made itself heard; and above the trees, in a sky flooded with silver light, until one might almost have read by it, the moon floated along in feathery silver clouds with a face that seemed wreathed in a happy smile. A dreamy glamor lay upon all of us; the words that suggested themselves, even without uttering them, were Lorenzo's blissfully musing verses:

“How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank!”

To me the memorable picture formed a bright closing passage to the chapter of my stay with the orphaned queen among cities: Jerusalem.

CHAPTER VIII

TRANSJORDANIA AND THE DEAD SEA

AFTER our return from the four days' auto trip which had the valley of Esdrælon for its main object, but which included visits to Tiberias, Safed and Haifa, I felt I should like to have a glimpse of Transjordania, the portion of Palestine on the eastern side of the Jordan which the Israelites had conquered in the lifetime of Moses. Bible readers will recall the tales, as related in the Book of Numbers, of the sending of the spies and of their opposite reports, of the kings, Arad of the South, Sihon the Amorite, Og of Bashan whose attacks were beaten back and their lands taken, of the Midianites and Moabites who met with a like fate.

It will be remembered that these lands were awarded by Moses to two and a half tribes who claimed them, as principally pasture-ground, on the score of their own possession of flock and cattle; the significant condition was attached to this award that, inasmuch as they had been first to come

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into their homesteads through the aid of their brothers, they should march first in battle while, in their turn, they assisted the other tribes in securing each its appointed heritage.

The Palestine which is under British mandate with a view towards creating a Jewish National Home is only an abbreviated edition of what was considered as belonging to the Holy Land in most periods of history. The borders of Palestine, which in the south and west, are formed, respectively, by desert and sea, have varied considerably in the north and east, between flourishing reigns such as those of David and Solomon, of Jeroboam the Second and Alexander Jannai, when Palestine expanded some distance towards the east, and between weaker reigns or periods of subjection to foreign powers. Governed by diplomatic consideration for the feelings of the French and the Arabs, the various treaties have taken from Palestine important northern portions which have much to do with regulating the rainfall, as well as the regions "beyond the Jordan," formerly peopled by the tribes of Reuben, Gad and half of Manasseh; the latter section was made an Arab dependency under British overlordship and placed under the rule of Emir Abdullah of the Hussein dynasty,

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a brother of the far abler and better known Emir Feisal, who is in charge of the Irak, also under British suzerainty.

A visit to Transjordania is really necessary to a proper evaluation of present-day Palestine. In Transjordania the Arab is virtually alone and free to carve out his destiny under British protection and guidance; there are no Jewish colonies, there is virtually no Jewish immigration. Here, on the one hand, the Arab has his opportunity to prove what progress or development he is able to bring about under conditions of peace and security, assisted by his brothers of other Arab countries; here, therefore, he can demonstrate what he would have made of Palestine, had there been no Balfour Declaration, no Jewish colonization, education or sanitation to disturb his apathy and to quicken his pace.

It promised, besides, to be an interesting experience to enter a land under Arab rule, inhabited but thinly, backward and primitive, a land untouched by the magic wand of the Jewish pioneer, unmoved by the stirring processes of rehabilitation which are taking place right by its side.

I had met, one evening, the head of the Transjordanian railway system, an English soldier of a delightful type, large, ruddy, genial, who had an

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interesting collection of kodak pictures he had taken all over Palestine and who asked us to visit him; the station-master of Jerusalem, a dear friend who had fought in the Jewish legion and spoke Arabic fluently, was willing not only to arrange our auto trip, but to accompany a small party consisting of a young friend from Bombay and myself. His very valuable offer was accepted reluctantly, as he was disabled by a broken left arm which had refused to heal and as the trip was sure to mean some rough riding; but the opportunity was too tempting to miss and we arranged to devote a day to seeing Transjordania.

It was a most absorbing, in parts a beautiful ride; the excursion consumed, all told, some thirteen hours of which one was spent in scrambling around ruins, two in resting and partaking of refreshments, ten in very rapid riding, sometimes over uneven roads which tumbled us around roughly in our splendid car, almost new, of American make. We had an excellent chauffeur, a masterful young Arab, very taciturn in contrast with Jewish chauffeurs; they are generally thought to be the best, but he, too, proved fully competent. The weather was ideal all the way; there were several changes of climate from extreme to ex-

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treme. In the mountains it was at times so cold that windows had to be closed, heavy overcoats buttoned up, with collars up; around Jericho it was quite warm when we passed in the morning, hot as an oven when we returned in the afternoon.

From the height of Jerusalem, leaving a little after 6 o'clock, it was a rapidly sloping trip down to Jericho. We passed the Tomb of Lazarus, then a spring the waters of which cannot be used because they swarm with leeches; there is a great deal of lime formation here in grotesque shapes; we are shown the road which leads to *Nabi Musa*, the supposititious grave of Moses to which the Mohammedans pay their pilgrim homage around Easter. An interesting sign, put up by the government, marks our reaching of sea level; as we descend below it, the temperature rises steadily. Bananas, orange trees and date palms appear now; it is a soil and climate for early vegetables; grapes ripen here in the early summer; a spring, bearing the name of Elisha, has an abundance of good drinking water.

Jericho, as we pass it, offers little of interest, a mere heap of ruins with nothing to remind of its days of glory, when it was a strong fortress, a favorite winter resort of kings, surrounded by

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luxuriant gardens of balsam-trees, date palms and other tropical growths. There is a modern Jericho, some distance from the old one, a small village with government buildings, hotels and convents.

We have our first sight of the Jordan; we cross it by the Allenby bridge, built in 1919, a high, slight structure, guarded by Palestinian officers on one side, by Transjordanians on the other.

There is almost every conceivable contrast between the crossing from Palestine to Transjordania, and between that, say at El Paso, from our country to Mexico. The Jordan is a dwarf compared to the Rio Grande and so is the little Allenby bridge a pygmy by the side of the Rio Grande crossing; nor is the contrast between civilizations or countries nearly so abrupt and violent here as that between America and Mexico when one passes from El Paso to Juarez; yet, on entering Transjordania, as on coming into Mexico, one is at once reminded that one has taken a downward step from a higher to a lower grade of civilization. At the bridge itself the Transjordanian officers, asking, in Arabic, for our names, ages, residences, occupations, are far less trim and dignified than their British colleagues on the Palestine side; the very telegraph poles on the Arab side are smaller and carry far fewer

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wires; adobe huts appear, also atrocious shanties built of flattened gasoline cans, with broken doors serving as patches and rough ladders leading to the roofs, giving the villages a frowsy, run-down appearance. Clear, broad springs are allowed to waste their waters unused; they lead to a swift, full brook where oleander shrubs grow in gorgeous profusion. The wheat stands low, there are fine mulberries and fig trees, the olive trees seem greenish, rather than silver-gray; there are terraced slopes here and there. We were told that the principal occupation here is sheep rearing; it is rather an amusing sight, as the auto rushes by, to see a lot of white-headed, otherwise coal-black shapes rushing in a furious panic up the hill; the goats are far less timid.

We come to Es Salt, the largest town in Transjordania (15,000 inhabitants), a place of khaki-colored cube-shaped houses with churches and mosques; we climb steadily, till we reach a height of some 3300 feet from which a fine view discloses the narrow Jordan valley with mountain chains extending north and south; the mountains around Jerusalem are particularly impressive. A rather pretty town is Suweda, inhabited by Christian Circassians, a good-looking type, of very light com-

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plexions. We come to a fine valley, neither as large nor as fertile as that of Esdrælon; in the distance loom the mountains of Moab, among them Mt. Nebo, where Moses died; we pass old Suweda, a heap of ruins; near it we see a camp of Bedouins, some ten or more tents of black goat hair, a sight much less uncommon here than in Palestine.

The road winds its way, up and down, through the mountains; our guide friend claims that a speedy airplane could make the distance between Jerusalem and Amon in half an hour. In one of these windings, by the mercy of Providence and thanks to our chauffeur's coolness, we escaped what might have been a fatal accident. As we were about to round a corner a careless chauffeur (a friend of our own) suddenly came rushing from the unseen side of the corner without blowing his horn; it was a thrilling experience which helped us to realize that these trips have their dangers.

We crossed the Zerka river over a wretched bridge of mere sticks; a fine stone bridge had been blown up by the Turks during the war. In the winter these waters, fed by splendid springs, are said to be almost impassable. Here again the vegetation is rich and resplendent with color, oleander shrubs of red and white dominating the scene.

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Around half-past ten o'clock we reached Jerash, one of the principal goals of our trip, an aggregation of ruins which is said, in size, in state of preservation, almost to rival the famous ruins of Baalbec.

Jerash, the ancient Gerasa, situated on the highway between Syria and Arabia, was, for a number of centuries, a flourishing center of classical and Arab culture. Its destruction was brought about partly by the crusaders under Baldwin II, partly by depopulation; in the village of Jerash near by many of the houses are constructed from the ruins of the old city. The conservation of these ruins is under care of the department of antiquities of the Trans-Jordan government which provides necessary repairs, has built a resthouse for visitors (where an admission fee to the grounds is paid), maintains a museum for inscriptions and issues an annual report.

Gerasa was a distinct type of Greco-Roman city, founded by veterans of Alexander the Great; its monuments are, many of them, in a comparatively good state of preservation. One enters the city by a splendid triumphal arch of three portals, dating probably from the time of Emperor Trajan. On a hill to the left there are the ruins of a temple of

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noble proportions; the stadium to the south still preserves thirty-two rows of seats; it has a diameter of some 250 feet; it probably accommodated as many as 50,000 people; there is a paved forum of semi-circular shape of which fifty-six pillars are still standing. From the forum issues what is perhaps the most conspicuous and singular feature of the site, an avenue of pillars about 2400 feet long and 38 feet wide, paved with large square blocks; of its 520 original pillars all but seventy have been either thrown down by earthquake or destroyed by vandalism. This avenue was crossed at right angles by a similar, smaller avenue leading down to the brook. There are charming remains, decorated with graceful carvings, of a great temple to the sun; much of it is in ruins, some of the statuary is preserved. There is an arena for gladiatorial contests, the stage of which is covered with wreckage, but which shows seventeen rows of spectators' seats. There are two Christian churches in a fair state of preservation, with a mosaic pavement at the foot of one; there are elaborate thermal baths, a nymphaeum and a necropolis; the city, evidently, was supplied with all the elaborate outfit of magnificence and luxury which belonged to a center of Roman culture in

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the flourishing periods of the Roman Empire.

We covered a good deal of distance in clambering about these hills and inspecting the various ruins, until we fetched up at the museum where, in the shade, a young Englishwoman was working away at dainty sketches of various flowers. Amid these giant structures, which, scattered over a wide space, tell their moving tale of glory and decay, of man's skill and power and of his ruthlessly destructive fury, it was refreshing to glean here and there some of the charming flowers which spring up in special profusion under the half-wild disorder of such an environment. The flowers of Palestine deserve a chapter for themselves, as they constitute one of the country's delightful charms. Here in Transjordania the flora differs very little; we saw much wild hollyhock; there was a curious, very pretty flower, looking deceptively like a wild rose, except for the purplish red of its color and the hairiness of its stem; there were two other flowers of hairy stems, varying only in color, the one a creamy white, the other a sky blue, which had daintily shaped petals; they were almost the size of shrubs, covered with an abundance of blossoms. In the stadium we saw a good many large, black centipedes of which we had noticed specimens in

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Jerusalem, mistaking them for rain-worms; they are called Moses' stick by the Arabs and seem to be harmless; there were also some gray lizards, much larger than those we are acquainted with at home.

After a refreshing rest we passed on, returning over some familiar ground, to Amon, capital of Transjordania, the Rabbath Ammon of the Bible. It is the smallest capital of a government I have ever seen, a town of some 6,000 inhabitants. High on a hill there is the fine castle of Emir Abdullah, a handsome structure with an appearance of newness, almost modernity; we were told that he enjoys a large allowance from the government, a goodly portion of which, it is said, he expends on preserving the friendship of neighboring Bedouin chiefs. It must be borne in mind that traveling in Transjordania was a risky venture not so long ago; our archæologist friend, when he visited here a few years ago, had to be protected by a troop of soldiers.

Our friend, the railway chief, had been unexpectedly called to Kerak; in Amon there was little to see except a Roman theatre, not nearly as large as the one in Jerash, seating about 3,000 people. We spent a little time at a very small hotel, the

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town's principal hostelry, which has an inviting exterior, but appears to offer crude comforts. In the streets we noticed a number of things we had never observed in Palestine: small Arab girls heavily veiled in black, an old woman walking along smoking a large pipe, Arabs with rifles slung on their backs. Even the postoffice gave the impression of a laxer discipline, of a lower order of civilization. There are rumors, now and then, to the effect that the Transjordanian government is disposed to encourage Jewish immigration.

We had virtually finished our trip; with our capable chauffeur and our excellent machine we had easily passed every vehicle on the road; we were getting home much earlier than we had planned. It occurred to us that we had time for a quick side-trip to the Dead Sea; we had seen it so often from a distance; we would just rush over for a flying visit.

It carried us over much waste land, around swampy spots, around sand-hills that glitter in the sun with salt crystals, past dull-colored water, stagnating in holes; not a blade of grass to be seen, a little gorse or dun thistle shrubbery here and there, a dull-colored, shapeless, disheveled soil across which, without a visible road, our auto totters and

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stumbles interminably, distances being much greater than they seem. The very air is stagnant, not a breeze stirring, it is about six o'clock. As we approach the lake, the mountains of Moab, lit up by the reddish light of the incipient sunset with something like an alpine glow, make a reflection as of burnished copper in the almost smooth, pale-blue water.

There are some boats to be seen, but no animal life whatever, not a fly or mosquito; the water slowly laps the pebbled shore which is covered with faded sticks. I dip my hands into the water and find it oily and sticky, more repulsive than any I had ever tried, it is more difficult to swallow than sea water; it reminds of magnesium and of epsom salts. We had neither time nor facilities to try a bath; in these waters, as in those of our own Salt Lake, it is impossible to sink; very likely they, too, encrust any substance which is kept in them.

Our excursion ended with two memorably beautiful sights. As we turned towards the west, to wend our way up the hills to Jerusalem, we beheld a sunset such as one can rarely see twice in one lifetime. The sun was largely hidden behind some dark blue clouds, but sent forth, in a semicircle around these clouds, bunches and bursts of lustrous

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gold rays which resembled a fountain of leaping sunshine; then, disappearing altogether, it set up above it a succession of glowing reds, rose-purples and purples, while the hills in front of us settled into an ever deeper purple, one taller summit, amazingly, lighted up, for a moment, into a top-spot of luminous green, even as all the rest was fading, rather rapidly, into hazy grays. And then, suddenly, as we climb between two rocks to a new elevation, Jerusalem is revealed in all its splendor, the very embodiment of picturesque romance; its towers and domes and cupolas rise up, still glittering with the reddish rays of the setting sun.

CHAPTER IX

TEL AVIV

WE WERE not a little proud, on returning to the hotel from our trip to Transjordania and the Dead Sea, to be told that we had come very near making a record, that we must have covered some 330 miles in that one day, which is very good going for those roads. We did not seem a bit the worse for it, any of us; we spent the evening quietly chatting with visitors and fellow-guests.

The next morning, however, I found that I had lost my voice and could only speak in hoarse whispers; the many changes of climate from extreme to extreme, had probably been too severe for me under conditions of lessened resistance, due to previous over-exertion; I had caught a heavy cold which was to cling to me for five weeks. Fortunately I felt certain, from a similar experience of half a year before, that it was a laryngeal trouble of no consequence, calling for no medical treatment or measures of any kind. Having attended,

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that day, to various urgent matters and visited a number of institutions, I found myself, the following day, in worse condition and decided promptly, upon the advice of friends, that I had better seek a milder climate and a less strenuous environment than those of Jerusalem. It would be wisest to go to Tel Aviv, the "Atlantic City" of Palestine, a town of many interesting and some unique features, which boasts some up-to-date hotels. I quickly attended to a few remaining duties and reached the station just in time to catch the afternoon train.

It was my first trip on a Palestinian railway, a journey of not quite three hours, and my senses were wide awake to take in the novel experience. My friend, the station master, had commended me to the conductor's special care, I shared a first-class compartment with only one other passenger, a handsome Englishman of the club-man type who smoked incessantly and preserved a stolid silence. I looked through the train; the first-class division had special compartments for ladies; second-class had straw seats and seemed to be patronized by nice people; third-class, offering wooden seats, had two sets of compartments in one of which were mostly Arab working people, reminding of our negro day-coaches; the division, however, is not a

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rigid one. A dining-car of the international sleeping car service was attached. The conductors are courteous, neatly attired, accomplished linguists in this land of many tongues. The train runs quite smoothly on what seems to be a well-ballasted track, but makes poor time.

The railway-system seems to be well managed by the government and is said to be reasonably profitable; employees, however, complain that wages and salaries are inadequate; the stations look presentable and clean; at one of them, Lud, a junction, there were large crowds, mostly of Arabs. The discipline is probably not quite up to European standards; at one station the station-master presented himself with naked feet in heelless slippers. At the larger stations one was reminded of German railways by the glass-covered refreshment stands on wheels from which drinks, oranges, cigarettes, candy were sold.

The day being bright, one could revel, to his heart's content, as one gazed, through broad windows, on terraced hills and smiling valleys, one of them that famous valley of Sorek where poor gullible Sampson sought out his false-hearted Delilah; a delicious sky over the waving yellow wheat made a charming picture. We passed Arab dwell-

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ings that were mere holes in the rock with a door at the entrance; there were fine tobacco fields, lusty, bluish green plants, recalling Kentucky scenes. In some of the olive-orchards the soil between the trees, a rich brown, is deeply ploughed for some crop or other. An Arab in blue overalls, with knitted cap, running playfully alongside the train, reminded of a Venetian noble in some old Italian masterpiece; here and there one comes across features which bring back memories of crusading knights. The villages we pass are of adobe with roofs of straw, hedges are mostly of tall cactus; there are nice truck farms, young orange orchards, some tall, fine date palms. As we come nearer the coast, we reach orchards of full-grown orange trees. The flowers in the meadows here are the same as those I had so greatly enjoyed in Transjordania.

I am in Tel Aviv, the youngest and the most keenly discussed town in Palestine, a bit of American mushroom growth on oriental soil, extolled as a wonder by its admirers, disdained and sneered at by its detractors. In some ways it is unique and without a parallel: a town 100 per cent Jewish, with population, government, schools, police, all Jews, a town, now of some 40,000 inhabitants,

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which began to spring up in 1909 and was incorporated only seven years ago; during the World War, I understand, it had a population of just five people who were stationed there as watchmen.

Here is an album of Tel Aviv photographs which graphically presents the whole quaint tale, all except its unpleasant hitch at the end. It starts with the picture of a meeting on the sand dunes in 1908; not a dwelling or other structure to be seen, a broad figure in blue sackcoat and white trousers, probably the man who has been mayor ever since 1910, standing in a determined attitude in front of a close-serried throng of some 150 men and women, with here and there a child or a dog. Another photo of the same date shows the levelling of the sand dunes by a little group of sun-brownèd men with cartwheels, ready for hot work, in bare feet and shirt sleeves, with broad sombreros against the powerful sun. Then the streets as they looked when the first ground was broken, a chaos of raw building material, and as they appear to-day: broad, well paved, with modern sidewalks and rows of young shade trees, flanked by modern residences, great institutions or inviting shops; the mayor's house is particularly attractive, landscaped in excellent taste.

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The streets, almost all of them, have names reminiscent of the Palestinian revival, names which appear in Hebrew and English at the street corners; there is Herzl Street with the fine Hebrew gymnasium named "Herzlia" at its foot, tributes to the memory of the lamented founder of modern Zionism, Dr. Theodor Herzl; there is Nordau Hill (Tel Nordau) in memory of his brilliant first lieutenant, Dr. Max Nordau. Rothschild Avenue, in honor of Baron Edmond de Rothschild, known all over Palestine as the "princely giver," has a broad neutral ground, planted with palms and floral patterns; Yehudah Halevi Street reminds of that passionate lover of Palestine, the greatest of Judeo-Spanish poets, whose melodious harp was at its sweetest in extolling the graces of Zion. Allenby Road, on the other hand, pays grateful homage to the British conqueror of the Holy Land, while Achad Haam Street and Bialik Street celebrate, respectively, the most eminent prose writer and the outstanding poet of the Hebrew Renaissance.

A vigorously alive, a boundlessly ambitious town was Tel Aviv in the days of its breathless onward rushes, nursing all sorts of American aspirations, training after such distant models as Atlantic

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City and Miami, until the comparison with the latter became uncomfortably close, a moving, many-sided tragedy of a thousand shattered hopes. For its town emblem, if the blaring exultations of my photo album are to be trusted, it chose the staunch stone portal of a fortress, with dazzling searchlight over the keystone and the confident motto: "I shall build thee and thou shalt be built."

One reviews all these triumphant fanfaronades with a wistful compassion, now that these boasts have been superseded so largely by the glooms of financial depression, industrial unemployment and heart-wringing destitution.

Yet it would be unjust to forget that there was and still is much ground for just pride, even for enduring self-gratulation. The record is one that cannot easily be matched in other quarters. In its short career this quaint Palestinian mushroom has managed to fit itself out with a large number of well-paved streets, an adequate water supply, unusually fine sanitary provisions, a system of education which, with its forty-nine schools, is complete enough to reach all the way from kindergarten to gymnasium (in the German sense), commercial and agricultural schools, teachers' seminary, musical conservatory and municipal library.

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It has its hospital and sanatorium, three banks, a number of excellent hotels, an exhibition hall; it provides for the lighter hours, on the seashore by various bathing establishments and a pretty casino, in town by public parks, by movies and cabarets; it has something of a boardwalk which may, some day, make a distant approach to the stupendous length, the huge width and the swarming life of that splendid promenade in our own Atlantic City; just now its smallness and narrowness, its defective repair and its unfinished skeletons of buildings on which the money gave out may suggest any other broken down resort; they are a distance of uncounted leagues from any resemblance with that unequalled and unapproached giant among the summer resorts of the modern world.

Yet there are not many towns which can boast as fine a police record. Its seventy-five policemen, most of whom regulate the traffic, have only an average of twenty-four violations per month to register; in these nearly eighteen or nineteen years the town has had two homicides, both of which ended in acquittals. It has the best electric light and power station in Palestine, a station which supplies power to some thirty factories, producing

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such diverse articles as silk, chocolate, silicate brick, textile goods, finished leather; there is even, I understand, a workshop where small industries are provided with power. And all this has been charmed, as if by magic, upon a soil that was deeply buried in yellow sands, a soil which smiles with palms and orange trees and all the brilliant tints of a rich flora as soon as the sand pall from neglectful ages is cleared away so that the earth can bask again in that benignant sunshine.

But I was far from pleased with Tel Aviv when I went out for my first walk, after I had looked to my comforts at a centrally located hotel; disgust and pity, dislike and puzzlement struggled with and succeeded one another, as I strolled through street after street down to the seashore. A mushroom town is an unpalatable sight almost anywhere, whether in Mississippi or New Mexico, in Colorado or Montana; no doubt, just the same in South Africa or Australia. Wherever men build in haste, to rush to something newly open, to catch big profits on the wing, they build neither honestly nor solidly, neither tastily nor cozily; the impatience of their hot greed, the restlessness and the materialism of their temper are bound to stamp their cheap and shoddy insincerities upon substance and

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form of what they build, upon the materials they choose, upon the pretentious, unlovely shapes they favor. In a land as venerable as Palestine, under its smiling skies, by its azure sea, one feels it a desecration to come upon false fronts, gawky patterns, hulky boxes of buildings, ridiculous towerlets and similar atrocities perpetrated by half-taught builders and overworked contractors at the pleasure of crude, ignorant property owners.

I was out of humor with the makers of "Spring Hill," the "Miracle City," as exuberant admirers like to call it; but these feelings of offended taste yielded soon enough to far stronger emotions, of deep pity, of compassionate distress when, coming to the business district, I discerned, almost at once, the heart-wrenching conditions which prevailed in the business and labor circles of the stricken town. It was, in truth, the case of Miami, Fla., on a smaller scale. Real estate speculation had been overdone; planning and enterprise had gone beyond the resources of capital; and here, as in other parts of Palestine, Poland's outrageous economic legislation, openly aimed at ruining its Jewish middle class, had reached out a long hand to undo the Palestinian immigrant of some means who suddenly found himself robbed of the assets he had

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left at home, unable to swing the enterprise he had started on Palestinian soil, for the full unfoldment of which he had been relying on the liquidation of home resources which, under one-sided taxation and iniquitous discrimination, had melted into nothing.

I had seen in Egypt how the poverty of a country betrays its presence in the small trader, the man who sits behind a table by the sidewalk, the man who walks the streets behind a wheel cart or with a tiny basket of goods slung over his shoulder, the people who wring the barest of livings out of a diminutive stock of cheap articles.

Here, in Tel Aviv, there were two striking indications of unsystematic organization, of commercial distress; there was the absurd oversupply of some vocations and commodities: three or four tailors in one block, three or four soft drink stands almost side by side, book stores and newspaper stands far in excess of any likely demand; and there was the bowed, shrivelled, ragged man or woman crouching on the floor behind some battered basket which sometimes contained no more than two or three of the small, grass-green Palestinian bananas that are so unattractive in appearance and so surprisingly luscious in taste.

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Of all these people there were none that so stirred my pity, whom I found arousing in me so warm an interest, as that exotically strange class of very dark-complexioned Jews which is known as the Yemenites.

The average reader is not likely ever to have heard that in South Arabia, in the country known as Yemen, there exists a very old Jewish community which boasts an interesting history that recalls tales of political power at one time, of literary and religious culture at another, but which is dotted with periods of persecution and suffering. How little is generally known of these people is poignantly illustrated by the fact that only during this month, December, 1927, in an otherwise thoroughly informed article of the *Geographic Magazine*, the writer erroneously claims that the Yemenite Jews are "fairly well treated in their native land"; for something like the last twenty years they have found existence in Yemen all but unbearable, owing to Mohammedan fanaticism and political unrest.

In the motley color scheme of tribal Jewry the Yemenite, as a rule, is not difficult to single out. He is an Oriental in garb, gesture and physiognomy; he clings, most religiously, to the screw-

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shaped side curl, his beard is mostly as lean as his features are haggard; his womenfolks are almost invariably undersized and thin, both sexes present a characteristic bearing of meekness and humility. A Yemenite rabbi I met attracted me greatly by the noble outlines of his face, by the natural dignity with which he pleaded his cause in a voice of much sweetness, in accents of transparent sincerity. They are said to be deeply religious; again and again I have seen some poverty-stricken trader sitting by his wretched little basket, absorbed in his prayer-book; the act had no appearance whatever either of public ostentation or of an attempt to gain favor. On one occasion I visited a Yemenite ex-soldier in his home; I found a type of clean, hard-working, self-respecting poverty, seasoned with a measure of contented cheerfulness. It wrung my heart at times to see how hard a struggle life was to some of them, still more to observe how meekly and uncomplainingly they seemed to bear their lot. There would be bare-footed porters, most poorly clad, a sack running from the top of the head down their shoulders, that seemed underfed and hardly equal to their heavy labors; one of these I saw in the streets of Tel Aviv can hardly have been more than twelve years of age. When

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their women, of an evening, trundle their tiny black babies to the seashore, their baby carriages would be sure to be the most worn and shabby in the whole procession. Yet, when one would encounter, in some home, a young Yemenite girl that was serving as nurse or maid, one could not but be struck with the soft, sweet gentleness of features that seemed to hark back to the dawn ages of Rebecca and Rachel. In Tel Aviv where they impressed one as being possibly the chief sufferers from the general depression, one could not help feeling that, of all his scattered race, the Yemenite seemed to be the one that had the greatest occasion for the plaint that "sufferance is the badge of all our tribe."

There was another, altogether opposite type that enlisted my keen interest, the young *Chalutz* (pioneer) and his female counterpart, the *Chalutzah*, the working population that served the various factories. They represented an interesting combination of Russian radicalism, defiant of convention, and of Jewish individualism, content with little, cheerful in the enjoyment of freedom, careless of the onlooking world. The *Chalutz*, I was told, betrays himself by his eschewal of the necktie; he wears a Russian blouse or flowing collar

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and generally unconventional clothes; many of them are intellectuals, highly cultured, most of them are of vigorous physiques and vivacious temperament; they are fiery enthusiasts for the Hebrew revival; sometimes, however, they are Yiddishists, believers in the German-Jewish jargon of Eastern Europe as the language which should be adopted as the national tongue in the national homeland.

Here, too, the confusion of tongues is apparent in the street life. Some of the elders, most of whose life has been passed in Russia or Poland, speak the languages of these countries, having received a secular education; others, having spent most of their lives in the ghetto, speak Yiddish; here and there one hears a bit of German from some Galician or of English from some Americanized or Anglicized Jew. But the younger people and children speak Hebrew; one hears a mother call her babe that has some unusual Biblical name or other; the phrase one hears oftenest is: *Mah Yesh?* "What is the matter?" Virtually all firms have Hebrew and English signs; yet often one meets with placards or notices such as *Dirah L'haskir*, meaning house for rent, which are only Hebrew, on the assumption that everybody must understand it.

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My mood towards Tel Aviv changed from displeasure and pity to the most cordial admiration and envy with the advent of the Sabbath and with the entrance upon such a Sabbath atmosphere as I had not breathed in over half a century, a Sabbath atmosphere more perfect even than the best which my childhood memories associate with the oldtime ghetto. I sought out the large new synagogue, ambitiously planned, but with the scaffoldings outside and inside that tell a story of broken-down effort; I found it crowded with worshipers, downstairs and upstairs; there was not a prayer-book to be seen, except in the hands of children; it was a congregation that had its prayers by heart, in more senses than one. I strolled, in all the bliss of ideal weather reflected in happy, contented faces, I strolled, on Saturday afternoon, along thoroughfares thronged with family parties, with countless baby buggies, with sweethearts couples and young married pairs, toward the board-walk which skirts the sea. It was a gigantic exhibit of Jewish family devotion, it was an even more remarkable display of all but perfect Sabbath observance.

True, it would not, as flawless Sabbath observance, pass muster with the rigid orthodoxy that is letter-perfect in the old codes: I heard from one

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house the sound of a piano, in the hotel I heard the ticking of a typewriter; here and there some one carried a cane; a traveling *Chalutz* in very scant costume had a knapsack on his back—all patent offences against rabbinical Sabbath law; but every store was closed, not a soda-water stand open, not a basket of goods to be seen, except for one lone Arab offering Japan plums, with no buyers; what was most remarkable of all, not a lighted cigar or cigarette was to be discovered in all that teeming crowd, some of them, I am sure, utterly innocent of all orthodox leanings whatever.

And there was no rigidity of puritanism; an occasional auto or motorcycle would, now and then, break in harshly upon the Sabbath quiet, arousing no protest, encountering no frowns; it was no more nor less than a family agreement to respect one another's oases of holiness, to set aside one day on which to take breath from the clashes and strains of labor, on which to bask in the pleasures of family union amid the sunshine of serene peace.

CHAPTER X

THE DOOR OF HOPE

I SPENT five days in Tel Aviv at the end of which my voice was normal again; the balmy temperature, the salt sea air, the quiet life had acted as restoratives, just as my friends had predicted. Much of my time was passed in walking, some in reading, correspondence, chatting with friends; I visited but few institutions, wishing to avoid exertion. I planned, however, to pay three visits of respect: One to the rector of the gymnasium, Dr. Mossinsohn, a dear friend whom we had entertained in New Orleans; he had just left for an important Zionist meeting in London, I was to meet him, months later, at the Zionist World Congress in Basle.

I tried to pay a visit to the widow of Achad Haam, the great master of New Hebrew prose; but she, too, was not at home; I succeeded in making an appointment to call on Chaim Nachman Bialik, who is universally acknowledged as the greatest of living Hebrew poets. I had never met Achad Haam

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who had been in very weak health for a number of years and had never crossed the Atlantic; I had become acquainted with Mr. Bialik at a Zionist convention in Buffalo last winter.

The general reading public is very poorly informed as to the literature which has sprung up in the last few decades in the New Hebrew tongue. It is a literature, partly of translations which have given the Eastern Jew access to the best of Western literature, partly of original work, history, fiction, drama, poetry, essays, humorous writing; much of it has enduring merit. Among the many poets of this movement, of whom there are several of outstanding originality, Mr. Bialik is recognized, without a dissenting voice, as the most powerful, original and versatile; his poetry has novelty and variety of themes, intensity and sincerity of feeling, freshness, richness and beauty of phrase; he can confidently challenge comparison with the master poets of other tongues.

In appearance Mr. Bialik's features, kindly but firm, suggest the practical man far more than the artist or dreamer; in the last few years he has written very little poetry, but, being a profound scholar in rabbinic literature and warmly interested in the progress of education, he has ex-

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pended most of his efforts on enterprises of popularizing and publishing rabbinic material.

Mr. Bialik showed me through his delightful residence with its charming garden and pretty view from the balcony; in his cozy, tastily furnished library he told me of his plans of publication; his genial, matter-of-fact manner, his perfectly poised wholesomeness of personality gave not the faintest hint of the titanic passion, the prophetic anger, the organ tones of moving tragedy with which his poetry vibrates, again and again. The house had been presented to him by world-wide subscription, as had been Achad Haam's residence and the home in Talpioth (a suburb of Jerusalem) of Eliezer ben Jehudah, author of the dictionary in ten volumes which crowned a lifework of championing the Hebrew tongue as a living vernacular.

For some time before I came to Tel Aviv I had been disquieted by the realization that my visits to the various colonies in the valley of Esdrælon had been a mere skimming of the surface, that these hurried popcalls had disclosed to me hardly anything of the inner life and the vital problems of the colonists, that they certainly had not enabled me to form an opinion or forecast of any value as to the prospects, good or evil, as to the probable

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success or failure of their difficult experiment. More and more the conclusion was forced upon me that there was but one way of entering into the inner life and apprehending the actualities of these enterprises: to reside for a brief time, say three days, in each of three typical colonies, sharing for the time their conditions of existence, observing the people at their work, in their hours of recreation, by their firesides.

The idea had come to me as early as the time of our four-day auto trip; while near Tiberias, I had mentioned my project to the leader of Dagania, perhaps the most interesting of the communist colonies, and had been invited to be their guest whenever I was ready, with the sole stipulation that I must not offer to pay for anything.

I found, in answer to my inquiries, that there were three main types of colonies; the old type, antedating the Zionist movement, the endowed colony; the most radical type, such as Dagania, at the opposite extreme, and between them the colony which is conducted on socialist plans of one system or another. My selection, after various consultations, settled on Petach Tikvah, Dagania and Nahalal; of these Petach Tikvah (Door of Hope) is the oldest and largest of Palestinian colonies. Na-

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halal, south of Haifa, founded in 1922, is said to be the most flourishing of the class known as *Moshave Ovdim*, workers' settlement, where public interests are handled by a committee elected for that purpose, where machinery is often bought and produce sold in common, under a system, however, of individual property and individualized labor.

Petach Tikvah was only an hour's auto ride from Tel Aviv and I had, somehow, the feeling (which proved correct) that just that kind of colony might be the easiest to handle as a start in tackling a venture the like of which I had never embarked upon before. I had no acquaintance in the colony nor had I provided myself with letters of introduction; but I was told that there were two small hotels, either of which would afford reasonable comfort.

The auto trip from Tel Aviv to Petach Tikvah presented hardly any feature that would cling to the memory; the chauffeur conscientiously tried to point out to me any notable place we would pass; but his Yiddish was of such an outrageously unintelligible sort that I took in but little of what he vouchsafed to give out. I observed the large and beautiful old German colony, Sarona, which has a pleasant air of European culture and German or-

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derliness: the wheat was almost ripe there (May 2), there were many fine old trees; I was informed at a later date that after the British conquest the Germans had had to leave, but that, upon their return when peace had been concluded, the British government was so generous as even to indemnify them for damages.

A Jewish colony, Ir Gannim (Garden City) had a large, old orange orchard; a hill, named Napoleon Hill, suggested resemblance to a human profile; we passed a pond, fed by springs, a sight somewhat unusual in Palestine; we came to a Jewish colony known as B'nai B'rak, a name familiar from a passage in the ritual of the Passover family service. A Bedouin village we saw looked rather uninviting, half black tents, half straw or mud walls; on the large plain there seemed to be a good deal of fallow ground. As we approached Petach Tikvah, I caught sight of a rabbit, the only wild life I ever encountered during my various auto tours.

Petach Tikvah is not simply a colony, but a large village of some 8,000 inhabitants; people who have been in Russia tell me that it greatly reminds them of the looks of a Russian village; no paved streets, only broad country roads, all houses

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having grounds of their own, a sprawling, rustic aggregation of dwellings, stores, synagogues and public buildings. The place is cleanly kept; there are passable sidewalks; there is much life in the streets; but the appearance of it all is countrified, nothing to suggest city or town. The colony was founded in 1879 by Jerusalem people who gave it up the next year after a very hard experience; in 1882 colonization was resumed. It has good schools, among them an agricultural institute; it has eight physicians, twenty-five teachers, three trained nurses; it is well organized as a community; contentions of any kind are brought before a rabbinical court.

I was so comfortable at the small hotel that I forgot all about my idea of making my home with the colonists. The proprietor and his wife were excellent people, Russian Jews who spoke fluent English, having lived in Edmonton, Canada, for many years; they made me so thoroughly comfortable by dint of home food, perfect privacy and an obligingness that scarcely knew any bounds, that I had not the heart to leave them.

It was a pretty place with its stone front almost completely hidden by a riot of Bougainvillæa blossoms; it had a well kept garden and a large movie

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theater, a corrugated iron structure, in the rear. There were several advantages in remaining where pure accident had landed me in a haphazard choice between two hotels of equal standing: the place was a sort of gossiping center for neighbors to drop in and chat; there was a good class of boarders, men of standing in the community, whose conversations at table were highly informing; and the proprietor, a whole-hearted Zionist, took so deep an interest in my quest for information at first hand that he not only gave up, though a busy man, a great deal of his own time to playing cicerone for me, but that he got his friends, leading citizens of the place, to give me of their time and to answer my many queries.

For the greater part of three days I went all over the colony and its surroundings with these men, covering a good deal of ground; I visited a number of the subsidiary colonies, asked innumerable questions, secured valuable information; I saw a good deal of orange culture. I passed a garden in which is cultivated the citron fruit (*ethrog*) which figures among the symbols of the Feast of Tabernacles.

But before I proceed to specify the information I gleaned on these rounds it is in order to advert

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to the dramatic personal experiences which were related to me by my newly-won friends. In Petach Tikvah one needs spend only a short time to have the notice of these occurrences thrust upon one's attention. As you go to the postoffice you pass a small green square with four modest gravestones and you are informed upon inquiry that here are buried the four men who perished as defenders of the colony at the time of the Arab attack of seven years ago.

My friend the hotel proprietor tells a moving story of how he came to be involved in this dangerous episode. He had had a very happy life and a prosperous business career in Edmonton for many years. There were no more than three or four other Jewish families in the place when he came; the relationship between Jew and non-Jew was perfectly friendly; his nearest neighbors, people in the employ of the Grand Trunk Railway, were extremely fond of his child, a very handsome boy. These Canadians, having three grown sons, had all of them volunteer for the World War; he owned his own home, had any number of friends and stood well in the community.

As the Jewish community increased, however, prejudice became rampant; at a certain court trial

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the judge had taunted a Jewish witness; my friend one day was told by his insurance agent that on account of his race the company would carry him no longer. He felt he could not live with self-respect in such an environment; having been an ardent Zionist for many years, he thought the time had come to seek a more promising future in the land of his fathers. His neighbors, though most loath to see him go, had always sympathized with his longings for the Holy Land; they had lost a son on the battlefield; "we have done our bit for our country," they said; "it is your turn to do your bit for your people."

It had been a hard parting, but the arrival was still harder; a few nights after he had come to Petach Tikvah the Arab attack began; he went into the trenches attired in his tuxedo, having been at some social affair when the alarm was given; with shining eyes he told me that, as he went forth to defend his wife and child, the feeling that was uppermost in him was one of solemn joy in the privilege of fighting on behalf of his people.

I have heard the story, of course, only from the Jewish side; and I am not unmindful of the fact that, wherever a civilized population is outnumbered by surrounding natives of an inferior grade

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of culture, be it among Kaffirs or Zulus, be it among American Indians or Hindoos, among Chinese or Siamese, the charge of treachery is hurled against the natives, cunning being the natural weapon and surprises the favorite strategy of the weak. The Jewish people with whom I spoke were unanimous and unreserved in their condemnation of Arab treachery.

The one circumstance they could not forgive, nor even understand, was this: that for at least twenty or thirty years they had lived in perfect amity with the Arabs; that many of the Arabs had been, in one capacity or another, their home companions upon whom they had lavished any number of kindnesses; that there were children whom they had helped to rear, servants and workers whom they had befriended, who seemed to be devoted to them; but that not one of these gave them warning of danger when, one day, all of them disappeared, while the next day 16,000 Arabs (it is vaguely rumored, under the lead of a French officer) surrounded the village, which would have perished to the last man had not British succor promptly arrived in the shape of bombing airplanes which put the Arabs to flight with considerable losses. The Jews claim to have kept the Arabs

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in check (they had only thirty-six rifles altogether) by superior marksmanship under cover until aid came. Since that time no Arab is ever permitted to spend the night in Petach Tikvah; it meant a lasting disruption of all the old bonds of friendship. Just how this wild outburst came to break so suddenly I never was able to ascertain; in semi-savage races there are volcanic fires which can be unleashed by the most trifling of incidents, incidents often forgotten afterwards.

Petach Tikvah is surrounded by a ring of colonies which I visited in the company of a prominent planter, a man in the middle forties, highly intelligent and thoroughly informed. What he told me agreed entirely with what I had learned at the dinner table and in the hotel lobby by conversation with the bright, experienced planters I met there. I also met, in the course of our rounds, a nephew of the physician at whose house I had been entertained on the eve of Passover; the young man is in charge of the important agricultural interests of his uncle and makes the impression of a highly competent and efficient planter.

We visited two colonies of orthodox factions, one managed by the Mizrachi, which constitutes the strictly religious wing of Zionism, the other by

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the Agudath Israel, which is religiously as punctilious, but bitterly opposed to Zionism; for some reason or the other, hardly any of the workers were in the fields. We paid a lengthy visit to a colony managed altogether by young women, a kind of pupil colony whose very able leader was, unfortunately, away. Lord Herbert Plumer, the High Commissioner of Palestine, had recently examined the colony and expressed himself highly pleased with its work and methods. This girl settlement, named Chavah (Eve), is a so-called *Kevutzah*, which means that it is managed largely on socialistic principles; its soil is furnished by the *Keren Hayessod*, the Foundation Fund of the Zionists. The girls, who number twenty-five, do all the work in cultivating forty *dunems*; they sign up for two years, during which they pay by work for the teaching and the living commodities of the place; all of them look sturdy, thoroughly fit for hard work; but it is something of a shock and affects one as unnatural to see girls of a high grade of intelligence performing such rough labor as digging, rolling heavy wheelbarrows and the like; it seems to roughen, almost to toughen them. To look into the tents where they live and to see the crudeness of their sleeping accommodations, the small

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boxes that contain all their little property makes one feel sorry for young women who have to forego all the creature comforts and dainty appurtenances which the feminine heart craves, even among the poorest. All of them, however, look clean, strong, healthy; none of them seems down-hearted or soured against life. Besides their forty *dunems* for general farming they have twenty-five *dunems* on which to raise feed crops, as they keep cows and raise farm-yard fowl.

We were unable to get any converse in a small Turkestan colony recently formed; its members could speak but little Hebrew; they had a crop of sunflowers which they cultivate for the oil they press from the seed.

In the Yemenite colony which we visited there was a great craving for a larger allowance of land.

At one place we came upon a class of girls, of the adolescent age, a bright, vivacious set, who were being taught by an agricultural teacher how to handle bees and honey; I found the Palestinian honey of a flavor far superior to the average.

The men who volunteered to be my guides, as well as the men I encountered at the hotel, were, all of them, principally interested in orange culture. All of them seemed convinced of its profit-

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ableness; the so-called Jaffa orange commands a high price in the London market; the mandarin orange is far less popular; for the lemon there is so little demand that it is cheaper in the home market than the potato.

The Jaffa orange is, indeed, a superior article; of the many I tasted there was not one that was other than delicious. It is a curious variety, with a flavor all its own, rather thick-skinned, of a brownish yellow; most people, when eating it, start by cutting off both ends; some people claim that it is a preventive for grippe.

The Jews, I was told, are looked upon as having been the most successful in orange cultivation and are consulted, especially with regard to grafting, by Germans as well as Arabs. The tree is planted from seed or seedling; the former method takes about a year longer. After the first year it is grafted; it is then held up with a eucalyptus stick; in the third year, when it begins to bear, it is either tied between two strong sticks or its branches are tied together.

Selling grafted trees is a profitable business for the present; some of my informants who follow it are apprehensive that the tree-school business is being overdone and that prices for grafted trees

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will come down. In the last few years orange culture has suffered, at times, from hail, at other times from locusts; I saw one orchard protected against gales by windshields. When one-year-old trees are transplanted, they are cut out of the ground with plenty of earth surrounding the roots; the tree sprouts anew two weeks after replanting. It must be carefully irrigated and constantly weeded; it has a dangerous enemy in a certain grass, just under the soil, which pierces the stem with a needle-like thorn.

I asked my new friends, all of whom were plantation owners, not one an actual tiller of the soil, whether they thought it likely that these colonists with whom I had had far less actual converse than what I desired, would come to form a peasant class which could be expected to cling to the soil? There is a clear-cut difference between the farmer who is willing to sell his farm any time he can get a good price for it, whose son and daughter are keen to rush to the city for its alluring chances of quick advancement, and between the peasant who has his pride of vocation and his attachment to the *glebe*, who, through generations of close contact with the soil, has developed habits, standards, ambitions, a whole psychology that is redolent of the soil. They

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could not, of course, commit themselves to a cock-sure reply; they felt inclined to predict that the younger generation would not abandon these hard-won conquests; they trusted the enthusiasm for the Hebrew tongue to give rise to an overpowering attachment to the soil and to its labor.

My friend, the hotel keeper, was particularly optimistic; when he arrived in Petach Tikvah six years ago, he declared, there were no roads, railroads nor telegraphs, no autos or electric lights. He finds life now infinitely safer and more comfortable; development, in his opinion, can at best only be gradual.

Others were less hopeful; some of them apprehended labor troubles, as Jewish workers complained of the smallness of wages and were in danger of underbidding by the Arab with his lower standards of living; still others found living too expensive and comforts too few. There is a large chapter of discontents which will have separate treatment in another connection.

For myself I had, regretfully, come to the conclusion that my plan for getting into close touch with three types of life in these colonies made demands upon physical energy, upon resources of previous information and of the "mixer" talent

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which I was unable to satisfy. To secure information from some well-posted man who is at leisure to answer questions was one thing; to get the confidence of the worker, to rough it with him in his shanty, to bother him while he is at his toil, was a vastly harder thing. The plan had been quite suitable and not inherently impracticable; but it demanded for its execution, a preparation and abilities which I found I did not possess. For the remaining twelve days of the month which I had allotted to Palestine I thought it wisest to return to Jerusalem.

CHAPTER XI

THE MEDIEVAL AND THE MODERN

THE twelve days in Jerusalem which wound up my month's visit to Palestine were devoted almost altogether to examining institutions and seeing people. In this as in other quests my aim was not to gather exact statistics, much less to get a complete survey; in the short time, with my limited strength, I could hope for no more than the gleaning of impressions, of ventured generalizations, the taking in of human aspects. I came as a traveler, not as a judge or an investigating committee; I could at best take in stray, swift glimpses; it would be absurd to pose as an authority and to view as definitive any conclusions I might arrive at.

The interests of education and charity are certain to figure more prominently in the Jewish effort to rebuild Palestine than would be likely in any similar process of restoration, say in the rehabilitation of Armenia or the transplanting of the Greeks from Asia Minor. Education and charity

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have held a paramount position in the life of the Jew from times immemorial. In the development of the moral culture of the Jew education and charity have been entwined so intimately, both with prophetic preaching and with practical legislation, with religious faith and with ceremonial observance, that in the course of the ages these two impulses have imbedded themselves as root-instincts into the nation psychology of the Jew.

In the development of medieval Jewish culture, these two, teaching the young and relieving the poor, went hand in hand towards high levels; when kings and prelates were still signing with a cross, literacy was all but universal in Jewry; long before charity systematized itself in institutionalism, it was dispensed in the Jewish home in the nobler form of personal service.

Yet, as Western civilization progressed and organized its activities in the light of superior knowledge, it left the medieval Jewish forms of education and charity far in the rear. As a consequence we have in Palestine two Jewish systems, both of education and of charity, a medieval and a modern one, which have but little in common, except the Jewish spirit that underlies them.

There is our medieval inheritance of educational

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methods, to begin with; to any one reared under modern auspices it is a great trial of patience, a hard test of self-control, to be brought face to face with it. I had had a taste of it in Petach Tikvah where, to oblige a friend, I had passed through the grades of such a school, starting with the child, ending with the adult, even with the gray-haired student. I ran the gauntlet of a very much larger and older institution of this kind in Jerusalem, starting at kindergarten age and ending with a group of aged scholars. It is, after every allowance has been made, despite personal sympathies and historical considerations, a most painful and embarrassing experience. One reminds himself how greatly the mental vigor of the modern Jew is indebted to the severe discipline and the intellectual athletics of talmudical training; one recounts to himself how many magnificent intellects drank, even from the aridities of this mixed soil, their sustaining strength in the contest for modern prizes; one understands how impossible it is, how unnatural it would be, for the Eastern Jew, out of his medieval isolation among semi-barbarous peoples, to step at once into the blinding glare of twentieth century advancement; and yet it seems pitiful to teach small children by wasteful mechan-

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ical methods that are utterly antiquated; it seems nothing less than tragic to pen up classes of splendid young men for working days of sixteen and eighteen hours, filled with the barren recital of musty pedantry, of theological controversy.

There is much to be said for monasticism and eremitism; it is silly bigotry and shallow self-complacency on the part of the "hard-headed" practical man to condemn lives and systems which turn their backs upon worldly pursuits; but it is a painful experience to a sympathetic onlooker to witness a wholesale waste of blooming young strength in a confining life of hard privation which seems neither to exalt the individual soul nor to benefit the wider community. Yet, after all is said, these are needed links in a chain of centuries; links of transition, unpalatable in themselves, yet having their legitimate function and their rightful claim to support, even on the part of those who have been carried far afield.

A similar survival lingers on, in Palestine far more than in any other Jewish community, of medieval methods for dispensing charity. Palestine, during the centuries of its slavery to Arab and Turk despotism, when the Jew was an outlaw in the cradleland of his people, meant two things to

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the Jew in dispersion: there were those that yearned to end their lives in the Holy Land, at least to be buried in holy soil or to pass their last years in pious study in that sacred environment; there were others who loved to send their pious mites there, for the support of aged students of the law, for the succor of the poor, for the maintenance of hospitals, orphan asylums, homes for the aged, in Jerusalem and in other Palestinian centers. Out of the prevalence of these practices there developed the system of the so-called *Chalukah* (distribution) with its unscientific methods, frequent dissensions and other incidental evils. The various Jewish clans in Palestine, coming from different parts of Europe, Asia, Africa, even America, lay claim each to the pious gifts coming from their respective lands, giving rise partly to a system of distribution which breeds its inequalities and other abuses, partly to the sending forth of "messengers" from the Holy Land, mostly young scholars with needy families, whose business it is to solicit support for Palestinian charities. A system so crude and uncontrolled cannot but prove wasteful; it fosters imposition on the one hand and distrust on the other; though impositions are comparatively few, while much apparent waste is un-

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avoidable under the circumstances. The system must still continue, so long as no authority has yet arisen to centralize and systematize the dispensing of Jewish charity in Palestine; the difficulties of that problem are complicated by the fact that the material situation of the Eastern Jew, never favorable at any time, has been greatly impaired by the World War and, almost more so, by the economic confusions and oppressions which have come as its aftermath.

For some time, however, even prior to the fervid enthusiasm of the Zionist movement, modern methods of educational and charitable activity have begun, partly to replace the old, partly to parallel them. I cannot, of course, lay claim to any complete or thorough acquaintance with the standards and resources of Jewish education in Palestine. I visited, quite unsystematically, such schools, from the lowest to the highest, as either had aroused my special curiosity or happened to be in charge of friends or lay across the path of my rounds. Thus I visited a number of kindergartens, because three of my friends were interested in the one or the other of them, and at the other extreme, for similar reasons, two rabbinical seminaries; I paid one visit each to the Polytechnicum in Haifa

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and the University in Jerusalem; two visits, in the latter city, to the Bezalel School of Arts and Crafts; I gave an entire morning to the Evelina Rothschild School for Girls under the capable leadership of Miss Landau; I paid a brief visit to the National Library, an institution which deserves to be included among educational resources.

As might be expected, the system of education in Palestine is not coördinated; there are endowed institutions, like the Rothschild School, institutions depending on more or less casual charity, institutions subventioned by the Zionists. In the last-named schools Hebrew is the vehicle of instruction; in the Rothschild School it is taught as one of the languages.

One difficulty with which, more or less, the whole educational system has to contend is that of language; the generation that built the tower of Babel dispersed, the Bible tells us, because its language had become confused; with the Jews the process is inversed; they cannot understand each other's languages because of their dispersion. I cannot forget the pathetic sight, in one school, of a little Kurdish Jew whose folks had just moved to Jerusalem, how shy and strange he looked; there was not a soul around that understood his language;

child reminded one of some untutored creature of the woods that had somehow strayed into town. And yet one could also see that in the few days he had been in that class, with the few Hebrew words he had learned, he had woven the first ties with his new environment and that his kind and tactful teacher had begun to win his childlike confidence. Not only in the case of this pathetic little waif, but, no doubt, with his parents and with all sorts of motley Jewish clans out of far away, half-wild corners, the old Bible tongue in its modern garb becomes the bond of understanding which reunites the scattered and brings home the all but lost.

I have reported, in a previous chapter, how little of what is generally regarded as the typical Jewish physiognomy is to be found in the curiously mixed and geographically diverse constituency of these classes; I ought to add that I was often struck, too, with the unexpected fact that unmistakable brunettes seemed, on the whole, rather rare, that, among these oriental children, contrary to the prevailing impression, blondes seem always to be in the majority.

The language difficulty becomes more serious as the educational process advances, until, at the Polytechnicum and University, it becomes exacting

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in the extreme. In order to permit the Hebrew language to be the vehicle in the teaching of modern science, a new terminology has to be created; textbooks have to be specially written and published.

Yet these difficulties are far more serious on the financial side than on any other; of faithful workers, of tireless enthusiasts to overcome them there is no lack. The dearth of financial resources is patent everywhere. A splendid institution, like the Rothschild School, is still in rented quarters after an existence of forty years; many of the schools are poorly housed; the library is pent up in dingy, uncommodious and uninviting quarters; art school and university are halted in their progress through lack of adequate support and owing to the poverty of their students; the crying needs of charity are constantly relegating to the rear the urgent claims of education. At least I had the personal satisfaction of bringing to the Polytechnicum a sizable subscription from a thoughtful friend and to some of the Jerusalem educational charities contributions from the Sunday School children of a generous colleague.

In visiting kindergartens and elementary schools it was interesting to observe the Palestinian child. I had often heard it maintained that children

flourish amazingly in Palestine air which, rabbinical witnesses declare, makes both healthier and wiser. In the colonies I saw some of the healthiest, strongest and most beautiful children who had ever come under my observation; in Jerusalem, though the ravages of destitution were sadly apparent here and there, I was often touched by the sweetness and trustfulness of the children; this was particularly noticeable in one kindergarten which I visited in the company of a gracious lady around whom the children swarmed in hearty welcome.

Among the Jewish charities of Palestine orphan asylums, hospitals and homes for the aged stand in the forefront. I found time and occasion for visits to two hospitals, the home for the aged, and the institute for the blind; I had to decline, in some instances, several times, invitations from other institutions; all of them, in the quest for better support, are particularly keen for visitors from the richest country on the globe. The hospitals I saw are striving hard to satisfy modern standards and probably compare favorably with their neighbors; one of them, connected with the *Hadassah* organization, boasts the most up-to-date Roentgen apparatus to be found in Palestine.

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A visit to the Home for the Aged is one of the notable sights in Jerusalem. There is a rambling, rather incongruous complex of buildings on ample, beautiful grounds, with fine old trees; there is more than one synagogue, to respond to diversities of ritual; the old people represent a fascinating assembly in which patriarchal faces, picturesque beards, notable scholarship and deep piety abound, with here and there men and women of the hoariest age and others of remarkable vigor or preservation.

An institution of the highest importance which belongs, almost equally, to the departments of charity, education and civics, is the *Hadassah*, the creation of an American Jewess, Miss Henrietta Szold; it is of all Zionist enterprises the one that has had no storms of criticism to encounter. Great institutions are apt to bear the stamp of their authors; the *Hadassah* owes largely to its creator the good fortune that it combines the best of Jewish spirit with the most advanced of modern methods. It is by no means accidental that a woman should stand in the forefront among the builders of the revived Palestine; ancient Judaism had its Miriams and its Deborahs, its Hannahs and its Huldahs; in modern Judaism women, both as individuals and

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through organizations, have wielded considerable influence towards the shaping of religious and charitable activities. Miss Szold was long known as a scholarly and literary worker before she entered the practical spheres of Zionist work; she brought to both lines of activity the traditions of her father's home, the spirit of which is embodied in her own career.

Hadassah is a Hebrew word, meaning myrtle; in the Bible it figures as the Hebrew name of Queen Esther; it thus recalls to the prosperous Jewess her duty of making every sacrifice on behalf of her less fortunate sisters. The movement started in 1913 when two Jewish trained nurses were sent to Jerusalem as visiting district nurses; sanitation and hygiene in Palestine lacked then the most elemental of provisions; there was an alarming prevalence of trachoma, a contagious and stubborn eye disease; smallpox, typhoid, malaria and other diseases ravaged the country; hospital service in Jerusalem was inadequate, in the rest of the country non-existent. Almost at once the *Hadassah* also instituted sewing circles and the beginnings of a department of supplies, to reach the destitute household and the ignorant mother. When the World War, three years later, searched

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the Holy Land with its visitations of destruction, the *Hadassah* organized and dispatched a medical unit of physicians, nurses, apparatus and medicaments which, in the course of two years, grew to the proportions of a permanent organization, establishing in Jerusalem a training school for nurses. The next step was the spread of *Hadassah* societies of Jewish women all over the United States, pledged to the support of Palestinian medical work. By the year 1925 the organization had reached a membership of 25,000 senior and 6,000 junior members; its contributors, in not quite four years, had come rather close to an aggregate of a million dollars in moneys collected and supplies transmitted.

I visited, besides the hospital and the clinic, a number of the welfare stations; these had been made possible largely by the beneficence of Mr. Nathan Straus of New York, best known in this country as the creator of the milk stations which dispense pasteurized milk to the poor and thus save many child lives. Both clinics and welfare stations, being unsectarian, are visited by many Arabs; in one of the latter the proportion of Arab patrons reaches forty per cent. Bottles of baby food are prepared which are dispensed to mothers for tri-

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fling fees or gratuitously; babies are weighed and examined; mothers are instructed in child care, not only in the making of beds, but even in the constructing of baby couches out of old boxes. The *Hadassah* conducts a number of hospitals and clinics in the larger towns; it sends physicians on regular visits to the colonies; it attends to the hygiene of the children in the Jewish schools. Its district nurses look after prenatal and postnatal care; it has immigrant services in Jaffa and Haifa; in many of its activities it coöperates with the so-called *Kupath Cholim*, the coöperative sick benefit associations of the working people; in quite a number of its charities the majority of beneficiaries are recruited from the Mohammedan and Christian population. There is a Canadian *Hadassah* which is providing funds for a much needed anti-tuberculosis hospital.

A *Hadassah* activity which hardly seems pertinent to medical work is the supplying of penny luncheons for children. It is one of the most pathetic features of the prevailing depression that thousands of Jewish children, in Jerusalem and in other parts of the country, must consider themselves fortunate to be furnished one meal a day, in countless cases their only meal of the day. There

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are other scenes in Palestinian centers which are even sadder than this, of witnessing the eagerness, the humble gratitude with which these little ones fall upon their rough and scanty fare; yet, somehow, the helpless suffering of innocent children carries to most of us a sense of injustice, a depth of pathos, such as few other sights can ever rival.

As I witnessed these strange meals in kindergartens and elementary schools, I could not help being reminded of a striking lesson in the boundless possibilities of human nature which I had had some years ago. One of the most gifted of Yiddish writers, I. L. Perez, tells a moving tale which I had regarded for years as an absurd invention of overbold fancy. He describes the trials of a poor Jewish worker in Poland who, with his utmost labors, cannot earn sufficient sustenance for his family of growing children and is forced, day after day, to send them to bed with their hunger scarcely half stilled. Being a pious Jew, he is accustomed to observe, in the course of the year, a considerable number of religious fasts; the old-time Jew had annually some eleven regular occasions of this kind to which people addicted to vows were in the habit of making all sorts of voluntary additions. Fasting was no hardship to him; he got much pleasure out

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of dividing his own share, on one pretense or the other, among those hungry little mouths; cheerfully, fading out of life by imperceptible degrees, he starved himself to death.

For many years I had thought the story well invented, excellently motivated, very lifelike in its description of the gradual process, but inherently improbable, an invention pure and simple; but a friend, coming back from a visit to his East European home where he had lost his father after the war, told me that the old man had passed away in just that manner, through unbearable pity with child starvation.

CHAPTER XII

REARING A JEWISH TYPE OF CULTURE

THE foremost prose-writer of New-Hebrew literature, known under the pen name of Ahad Haam (one of the people), was the weightiest preacher of a cultural Zionism, a Zionism which lays stress on the gradual creation of a Jewish culture, rather than on the speedy building up of the National Home. In his opinion the first step towards renationalizing the Jew was to strengthen his Jewish individuality, to revive and reinvigorate all that was typically and nobly Jewish and thus to fit the Jewish people, whenever they would return to the ancient soil, that they might enrich the world's civilization again with an original contribution, product of their national genius, as they had done, centuries ago, through the religious and moral concepts, through the humane legislation, through the wealth of literary beauty with which the Bible had steadied and ennobled the civilization of the Christian and the Mohammedan world.

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Whatever one's judgment may favor, whether one hopes to develop a Jewish culture under the various environments of world-wide dispersion or whether one would rather look to the magic of the holy soil, to the inspiring associations of historic spots, to a more normal distribution of vocations and occupations for the spontaneous flowering of a Jewish national culture, it is inevitable that Palestine should tend to centralize, more and more, whatever efforts may be made in these directions. It was thus that both Ahad Haam himself and his friend, the master-poet Bialik, came to live in Tel Aviv; it is thus that every movement in this direction, on behalf of language and literature, of drama, music and the plastic arts, must come for inspiration to Palestine.

It was in Palestine, and not in East Europe, that Hebrew became a living vernacular again. The story is one which is not easy to tell in few words. The Hebrew language ceased to be the medium of a people's common converse as early as the period of the return from Babylonian captivity. Aramaic took its place, the language of Laban; it was the language spoken by Jesus, as is attested by those few of His words which are quoted in his original utterance; it is not only the idiom of the Talmud,

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but it is employed in the Jewish ritual for formulas that are intended for popular understanding, such as the marriage formula and the memorial prayer for the dead.

Hebrew has never been a dead language altogether; it lived in Bible and prayerbook which were the property of the common people; it remained the vehicle of scholarship; it served for emergency communication with Jews of other lands, it survived in many conversational phrases and popular saws; it had a vigorous literary revival during the Arab domination in Spain. In modern times, the Italian and the German Jews were the first, in the eighteenth century, to take it up again for literary exercise; in Galicia it was employed by the so-called *Haskalah*—(enlightenment)—movement for the controversial battles of the day; then a school of fiction and poetry arose which cultivated a clever, but rather slavish, style of mimicking the Bible's classical simplicity, confining itself to its very limited vocabulary, thus producing pretty bits of mosaic work which were lacking in naturalness, fluency, rugged force.

The New-Hebrew threw off these shackles; it not only availed itself for journalism, essay, poetry, drama, philosophy, science, of the words, phrases

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and idioms to be found in post-Biblical Hebrew literature; it boldly coined new words to designate modern objects and ideas, to satisfy modern needs; it readjusted the structural forms of the language, so as to fit it to new modes of expression. Yet, though it recreated the ancient tongue, though it lent it a clearness and precision, a lightness and suppleness, a wealth and diversity of resource such as it had never possessed, it did not yet rise to the popularity of a spoken tongue; it was employed at literary meetings, in occasional addresses; it never served the uses of the home, the mart, the street; it did not come to people's lips when their elementary feelings cried out for passionate venting.

It was the merit of Eliezer ben Yehudah, an almost lifelong consumptive, to have forced this final forward step by his single-minded, persevering devotion to that one cause; with the story of that remarkable struggle it will be better to deal in another connection.

At the present time the battle for the full rebirth of the Hebrew tongue in Palestine is virtually won. There is a remnant of opposition on the part of the ultra-pious to whom it is a species of desecration to employ the Holy Tongue for secular and

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everyday uses. There is another antagonism from the opposite quarter: from the so-called Yiddishists who agitate for the adoption of their German-Jewish dialect, the Yiddish, as the national language; their argument pleads that, being the language of the East European masses, Yiddish is steeped in the essence of the Jewish spirit. But while the Yiddish dialect has created an estimable literature, particularly strong in poetry, pathos and humor, it has not yet managed to rise to the dignity and bearing of a full-blown language: vocabulary, grammatical rules, pronunciation and spelling are far from the definiteness and crispness which characterize a language, as against the looseness and slovenliness of a dialect. Besides, indications are not lacking that the Yiddish dialect may be in danger of a more or less speedy extinction.

In the next few months this subject is likely to give rise to an interesting controversy. An endowment has recently been offered to the Hebrew University at Jerusalem for the establishment of a chair for Yiddish; whether the endowment will be accepted seems doubtful. The study of Yiddish literature ought not to be out of place at a Jewish academy of learning; on the other hand, there may be practical considerations which may render it

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inadvisable, under present circumstances, to confer such a distinction upon the study of just this dialect.

The Hebrew language as a living vernacular had its start in the school, with the little ones and in the intercourse between Jews of many languages who had no other means of communication; it was strengthened by the Hebrew newspaper, Hebrew lecture, Hebrew theater, etc. From the little handful of enthusiasts who constantly insisted: *Rak Ivrit*, that they would speak only Hebrew, through the homes where the babes were taught their first babblings in Hebrew, through the street where people took a pride in championing Hebrew conversation, the popularity of the language grew by leaps and bounds; it is still being shaped and moulded by popular usage, though, even at this early stage, there is a *Vaad Halashon* (language commission) in Jerusalem to direct its growth along legitimate lines.

And, already now, one hears occasional puns in Hebrew; here and there, through popular wit, snappy idioms arise which remind of modern slang; when a greeting like *L'hitraoth (au revoir)* seems a little cumbersome, popular usage abbreviates it to *L'hit*.

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An ultra-modern school is even agitating to have the old Assyrian letters abandoned and replaced by Latin lettering with minor modifications; it is a first revolutionary effort, not by any means a timid effort, which, as far as I am aware, has no more than two or three publications to its credit.

These tendencies have gathered in Palestine a considerable group of Hebrew literati, some of them the foremost names in that branch of literature. Their poetry and fiction, their work in history and biography relate largely to Palestinian scenes and events; a great deal is still being done in the field of translation. There is vigorous activity in journalism and periodicals; there are two monthlies and one bi-monthly, all published in Jerusalem; three different factions are represented by Hebrew dailies; there is a magazine devoted to agriculture and another to commercial and industrial pursuits. A really indigenous Hebrew literature, however, cannot arise from the immigrant; it must await the generations that have become one with the soil, it may be reserved for a period of greater expansion and leisurely ripening.

The lyre of Bialik has been almost mute from the moment of his landing at Jaffa; of late a young *Chalutz*, Isaac Lamdan, and his deep-felt poem,

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Masada, have been hailed as promising a star of the first magnitude on the poetic horizon. Palestine is still a good deal of a Babel of confused tongues; I was told of a school in which German people are teaching English to the Arabs. Hebrew is recognized by the government, however, in its public notices, in the courts and other offices, in street names and on postage stamps; in all of these it manages, somehow, always to drift to the bottom.

When one comes to Jerusalem around the time of Passover one soon perceives by the Hebrew placards announcing various art exhibitions, that strong efforts are being made to create a typical Jewish art; these efforts received their first impulses in Europe.

The plastic arts: architecture, sculpture, painting, have never, until modern times, flourished among the Jews; throughout antiquity and the middle ages the Jews were imitators in these fields, in a very small way, with hardly any originality, furnishing not one solitary name of the least eminence. Partly, of course, they, as well as the Mohammedans, labored under a misinterpretation of the Second Commandment which forbids the making of carved images or of any reproductions whatever for purposes of worship; partly they followed

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the bent of the Hebrew genius which laid stress on spiritual content, rather than outward form, on holiness rather than beauty.

As the Jews entered into participation in modern culture, they began to take up these pursuits and to win honored places; in the nineteenth century, by the side of a host of second and third-rate artists, they could boast names of high eminence, such as those of Joseph Israels in Holland, the sculptor Antokolsky in Russia, Max Liebermann in Germany. These men, reared under modern influences, rarely or never turned aside to deal with Jewish themes, though critics claimed, here and there, to discover Jewish tendencies or characteristics in subjects or treatments.

The Zionist movement inspired a number of Jewish artists to emphasize the Jewish note in their work and to cultivate Jewish individuality. One of these who passed away in mid-career was E. M. Lilien, a graphic artist and illustrator of rare merit, who did much excellent work of a decorative character, exploiting the picturesque possibilities of Hebrew lettering, somewhat like Arab decorative art is in the habit of using the Arabic alphabet; studying the Jewish physiognomy for its particular values of expression, and devising, for

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background and ornamentation, various symbolisms to hint at the meanings of Jewish past and present.

A living artist of eminent standing in German art who makes his home in Palestine for ten months of the year, is Hermann Struck, best known for his masterly etchings and his book on the art of etching, also through his portrait work. A personality of great charm, rigorously orthodox in his private life, a leading figure in Zionist activities, Mr. Struck has produced valuable studies of Palestinian landscape and has furnished inspiration to at least two highly gifted pupils, Lesser Ury and Marc Chagall, both of whom deal preferably with Jewish themes. Hermann Struck is a strong believer in the possibilities of a Jewish school of art, though he readily admits the shortcomings of such efforts as have been made thus far.

The most active of all Jewish art teachers in Palestine is the founder and head of the Bezalel School of Arts and Crafts in Jerusalem, Prof. Boris Schatz, a sculptor and painter of considerable merit who has, like no other, dedicated his life to the promotion of Jewish art. Having held a dominating position in the art circles of Bulgaria, he founded his Jerusalem school in 1906, and de-

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veloped it rapidly to a point where it embraced a number of workshops which employed in 1912 as many as 400 workers, a museum and an art library. The Bezalel school teaches metal work, wood carving, engraving, rug weaving, embroidery, painting, sculpture, altogether some thirty-six species of art crafts. The World War came very near destroying the school; it recovered quickly, however, and sent an exhibition to this country in 1926; in Europe its products, at various exhibitions, have elicited much praise; at the recent Wembley Exposition in London they won a medal.

The Bezalel school has reared a number of estimable artists and given the impulse to some publications of merit, notably Mr. Abel Pann's Bible illustrations, of which two volumes have been issued, and Mr. Raban's colorful edition of the Song of Songs. Prof. Schatz, in his travels and through his connections, has assembled in the Bezalel museum a collection of objects of Jewish art and art craft dating from many periods, together with Jewish ceremonial objects, a surprising number of self-portraits by Jewish artists, portraits of Jewish notables, some 6,000 numbers altogether. Boris Schatz himself is a strange combination of the ardent visionary (he has written a utopian reverie

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in Hebrew) and of the practical organizer; his school has suffered so greatly from the recent financial depression that there have been reports of its closing, which, fortunately, prove to have been unfounded. There are those who charge it with lack of originality and with deficiencies of taste; of Prof. Schatz's standing as an artist and of his self-sacrifice as a devoted worker there can be no question.

There are many artists who have no connection with the Bezalel movement; the art output in Palestine seems out of proportion with its resources of patronage; there can be few countries so diminutive in size which so abound in art exhibitions, especially in the three centers: Jerusalem, Haifa and Tel Aviv. Among the artists there is much poverty; promising talents languish through the lack of financial support. Among the various exhibitions during my stay there was one of landscape photographs which seemed to catch, with admirable artistic insight, the physiognomy of the Palestinian landscape, its quaint distribution of light and shade; the artist, a very young man, was unable to elicit the response he merited.

In the field of sculpture medals, plaques and portraits in relief seem to be the country's only

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art product; its present poverty, joined with Mohammedan traditions and old Jewish obsessions, stand in the way of any developments other than those which the tourist trade is likely to favor.

The evidences of Jewish development in architecture seem as yet few and far between. In the history of that art the Jew of all the ages must be assigned a very modest place, the place, almost throughout, of the dependent, unoriginal imitator. The Temples of Solomon and Herod, renowned for their magnificence, were not distinguished for anything beyond imposing proportions and dazzling splendor; the Palestinian synagogues of early days, of which a number has been unearthed, follow Greek and Roman models, in plan and decoration, except where special needs of worship and the employment of Jewish symbols prompt conventional modifications. In the architecture of the new Palestine there is much that is entirely out of accord with an oriental environment; older structures, like the tomb of Rachel, have the dignity of inward consistency and outward harmony. Here and there, as for instance in the Haifa Polytechnic, one meets with successful attempts at architectural effects which are not copied, and yet in perfect harmony with their surroundings.

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There is a Hebrew Artists' Association which comprises almost one hundred painters and sculptors; it offers an annual exhibition at which the modernists have a separate room and their own jury. The works of the modernists seem to be in greater demand, partly, perhaps, because they make greater efforts at seizing upon the individuality of Palestinian landscapes and types; almost all of them, however, have been trained in Western art schools; one of them, Zionah Tagger, is a native of the Holy Land.

The arts of musical and dramatic expression would seem to have historic and innate advantages, in the fostering of culture, over the plastic arts. That the Jewish race is possessed of unusual endowment along these lines can hardly be subject to doubt. There are strong indications of dramatic power in various parts of the Hebrew Bible, such as the Song of Songs; the Psalms and other passages furnish ample testimony that the "Song of Zion" constituted not only an essential element of Temple worship, but was deeply and passionately rooted in the people's innermost soul-life. In modern times it is a matter of common knowledge how large and brilliant a galaxy of composers and singers, of virtuosi and orchestra leaders, of play-

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wrights, actors and managers the Jewish race has given to the concert platforms, the dramatic and operatic stage of modern nations.

Yet the Jewish note has but rarely been sounded by Jewish playwright or actor, composer or musical performer. It is only in the last two or three decades that the Yiddish stage and its drama have risen to a certain standing in the world of dramatic art, that plays like the "Dibbuk" have sounded a novel, vibrant note which unveiled the innermost depths of the Jewish soul. Similarly, it is only in our day that composers like Ernest Bloch have sought, in Jewish symphonies, to interpret Jewish motifs. The first attempts at "Jewish opera" were ridiculous mongrel creations of no art value whatever, as the first Jewish dramatic troupes had hidden their modicum of real ability beneath offensive surfaces of unpolished crudeness.

Out of Russia there came the dramatic troupe *Habimah*, first to give plays in the Hebrew language in a manner which met with a respectful reception from competent Western critics. There is a Palestine Hebrew theater under the management of Gnessin and a dramatic studio under the name of *Ohel* (tent).

Among the masses there is slowly arising a He-

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brew folk song which in all probability bears a close relationship to the considerable body of Yiddish folk song, the property of the Jewish masses of East Europe. During my short stay at Tiberias I came very near hearing "La Tosca" sung in Hebrew by Mr. Golinkin's Palestine Opera; in Jerusalem, later on, after the opera season was over, I heard, at a concert, two of the troupe's leading artists; it was the first and only time in my life that I had the opportunity of hearing arias from standard operas like "Carmen," "Lohengrin," "Tannhauser," "Othello," "Samson and Delilah," "Andre Chenier," discoursed in excellent Hebrew; the voices seemed well trained and of a high order.

That there is some promise of the coming of a Jewish type of opera may be gleaned from the fact that at the Sesquicentennial competition in Philadelphia the first prize of \$1,000 was won by a three-act opera composed by Jacob Weinberg, a Russian Jew; the opera, now published, has for its theme the returning to the Holy Land of a village-bred Jewish workingman. It is entitled "A Night in Palestine."

It goes without saying that from the poverty-stricken resources of Palestine it is absurdly im-

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possible even to organize, much less maintain, a full outfit of orchestra, artists, scenery and ballet. The municipality of Tel Aviv has given a small annual subvention to opera.

Yet I understand that there are occasional ballet recitals, made possible largely by two schools which teach artistic stage dancing. A Jewish novelty in the line of dancing is offered by Baruch Agadati, who manages, in Tel Aviv, at the season of the Feast of Esther, masquerades which are said to draw large audiences. Agadati presents a Jewish specialty in the shape of Chassidic dances which has met with much applause in European centers and stirred enthusiastic approval even in Paris.

A cultural agent of high promise is the Hebrew University on Mt. Scopus which, as planned by Mr. Geddes, bids fair to become one of the outstanding architectural groups of the Holy City. The cornerstone of its first building was consecrated before the World War was quite over; at the formal dedication Lord Balfour was the central figure; General Allenby and his staff were present on both occasions; the great universities of the civilized world were represented by delegates or through messages, the various religions of Palestine took part through their foremost prelates. The location

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presents one of the ironic paradoxes of history: it was from Mt. Scopus, almost nineteen hundred years ago, that Titus directed the siege of Jerusalem which led to the destruction of the Second Temple and to the loss, by the Jews, of political existence.

The Hebrew University is as yet only a small institution, principally devoted to research; it has started with a Microbiological Institute, a Chemical Institute and an Institute of Jewish Studies; the last numbers not quite 200 students; the national library of some 100,000 volumes will probably, in time, become an adjunct. These research institutes have published a number of valuable investigations, couched, of course, in Hebrew, which is the language of instruction in all studies. The Chancellor is a former American rabbi, Dr. Judah Leon Magnes; the Board of Directors embraces such names as Professor Albert Einstein, Dr. Chaim Weizman, Judge Julian Mack, Mr. Felix Warburg, James de Rothschild. The funds for the Microbiological Institute, which has already rendered much practical service, have been collected by American Jewish physicians. The next phase of growth is to consist of a Balfour-Einstein Institute of Mathematics and Physics. The Univer-

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sity is reported to have suffered severely from the recent earthquake.

A strong impetus to the study of archæology and to the art life of Palestine may be looked for from the Archæological Museum which John D. Rockefeller, Jr., is offering to build, equip and endow at a cost of \$2,000,000. The government, which has its valuable collections inadequately housed, has allotted a commanding site to the new edifice between the Mount of Olives and the Temple Mount. The building is to be in Romanesque style, constructed of Palestine limestone, and is to fit into the town-planning scheme that has been adopted. It is to be erected and administered by the government with the assistance of an international advisory committee.

CHAPTER XIII

POVERTY, DISCONTENT AND PROGRESS

THE specter of his people's poverty haunts the Jewish pilgrim almost from the moment when he sets foot upon his journey. When I had started from Marseilles to Alexandria, there had been the stowaway boy for whom a collection had to be taken up among the Jewish passengers; on the small steamer from Alexandria to Jaffa, among the laborers in third cabin, I found a young printer who lacked the admit-fee to Palestine; when I had landed at Jaffa and looked for a porter to convey my hand baggage, there was the pale, haggard-looking Jewish boy who pleaded for the job.

On our auto trip of four days we were painfully moved by the distress we found in a disbanding colony that had failed, a proud distress which would not hear of any suggestion of charitable relief. In Tel Aviv and Petach Tikvah it was principally the black Jews from Southern Arabia, the Yemenites, that stirred my deep compassion by

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the meek patience with which they bore their hard lot.

But it was in Jerusalem that I was to be faced by the very depths of destitution and starvation. It is by no means a new story there. Decades ago I heard and read of the caves and dens in which part of the Jewish population was dwelling in Jerusalem; the old Orient, generally, is habituated to degradations of poverty to which the meanest slums of the Occidental world are strangers; even in what a great German writer used to call "Half-Asia," in Austrian and Russian Poland, there exist among the Jews conditions of the barest hanging on to existence which, to a western man, would seem not only unspeakably inhuman, but incredible and impossible.

It is a commonplace observation that there is a vast difference between hearing and reading on the one hand and between facing the stark, staring reality on the other. It was a trying experience to watch, in kindergartens and other schools, entire classes of children, as they were falling greedily upon their one and only meal of the day; but as one noticed some of these children pocketing scraps and remnants of the food to bring home, one could not help wondering what these homes

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might be like. In 1921, visiting Vienna during its worst period of dire distress, while I had given whatever assistance was in my power, I had not been able to summon the courage for hunting poverty down to its lairs; pictures I had seen and stories I had heard had made me fear that I might prove unequal to such an ordeal. I have always felt that I had done wrong to spare myself; I was determined, this time, to make every effort towards confronting these disheartening and unnerving sights.

Friends tried to dissuade me; it called for insistent urging to secure competent guidance in such a quest; fortunately a well-known American writer had expressed the same wish; a well-informed social worker took us around; even she evinced a certain reluctance to disclose the worst.

When one breaks upon the privacy of poverty-stricken families one meets with all sorts of reactions, some of which can be dealt with only with delicate tactfulness. In one home there would be stolid indifference, in another a sense of deep humiliation; in one home dull despair seemed to reign, in another the sort of cheeriness that makes the best of a bad bargain. The young wife of a crippled beggar appeared happy above the aver-

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age; she had brightened up her few sticks of furniture to look as inviting as the gloomy place would let them.

My companion, the writer, claimed to have seen far worse places on a visit to Polish ghettos some time ago; my own experience had nothing to match the disconsolate bareness, the stuffy darkness, the repulsive ugliness of these Oriental holes. Most of these people had rags for beds, dingy, tattered clothes; they sat in dejected attitudes; life seemed to offer them nothing but what was dull, dreary and void of hope.

There were, however, hardly any young people among them; they did not belong to the older inhabitants of Jerusalem whose clean, bright households, displayed with a happy pride by neat housewives, I had seen on other rounds; by far the most of them were recent immigrants, mostly from Turkestan, Kurdistan, Persia, refugees who were being sheltered temporarily.

Of all these sights by far the most harrowing was a small, dark room, with a low ceiling and a bowl-shaped floor; some fifteen children, mostly babes from two to five years old, sat in that bowl huddled together for warmth, with not a toy between them and not a sound issuing from any of

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them; it was the sort of sight that haunts one's memory like a nightmare.

It was my misfortune to have come to Palestine at a time of depression and discouragement. All about me was the crystalline freshness of spring; landscape and life abounded with rich coloring; friends, old and new, brightened one's hours; the very air seemed stimulating and refreshing; but when one began to discuss conditions in business and labor circles, as to politics and costs of living, as to present comfort and future outlook, one encountered, on every hand, an outpouring of complaints and grievances, of charges and derogations, of discontent and unrest.

There were many who complained against the Zionist administration. Some of these charges were flimsy and untrustworthy on the very surface; they amounted to no more than that cynical skepticism, that habitual ascribing of low aims, that suspicion of motive and that scenting of corruption with which idealistic endeavor and public-spirited activity will always be met by sneering doubter and cynical egotist. There were others who, plainly, spoke out of the disappointment of private expectations or aspirations, still others whose dissatisfaction was due to differences of opinion or

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personal antipathies. Here and there one came upon some residue where it appeared likely that the administration or one of its officers had made some mistake, had taken the wrong road, fallen short of fulfilling a difficult promise or been hampered by failing resources.

To any one who strongly believes that freely elected authorities must command a certain confidence, even a degree of loyal subordination, to any one who is in the habit of standing by his friends when they are under fire, it was exceedingly trying to endure a bombardment of charges and insinuations which he had neither the time nor the strength to investigate with any thoroughness. Under the circumstances it was fortunate that I postponed and delayed my visits to the administration offices until almost the end of my visit; I was, then, able to obtain light on most of these complaints and to convince myself again, how cruel a martyrdom it is to serve so difficult a cause, what a perseverance of self-abnegation, self-sacrifice, and unyielding patience is called for on the part of these officers, especially at a critical stage like the present one. The present methods of organization and administration can, of course, be improved upon and are in the process of radical

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change; here and there some officer or employee is in the unhappy position of the square peg in the round hole; but the matter for surprise is not that things have gone wrong, here and there, but that, under circumstances so difficult, they should be going as well as they are.

There is legitimate cause in abundance for dissatisfaction with the English government, its policy and its methods, as mandatary of Palestine; the current complaints relate to a number of departments.

England has made little or no change in the Turkish system of taxation or the Turkish legal practice; the exaction of the tithe bears hard on agriculture and the heavy taxes on land transfers are unfair to the Jewish purchaser. In all these years England has done nothing to open the crown lands to Jewish immigration; she is now, very tardily and slowly, preparing a survey of these lands in order to examine titles, as there has been some squatting which must be taken in account in dealing with the legal situation.

England has done little or nothing to foster new industries; on the contrary, she has rendered their growth difficult by occasionally taxing the import of raw materials, while freely admitting the manu-

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factured article; latterly the government was on the point of adopting a commercial treaty with Syria which would have been seriously detrimental to important industries of Palestine, almost all of them initiated by Jews.

In apportioning subventions to education it is contended that the government is unjust to the Jewish schools, which receive hardly any aid, while the Arab schools are liberally subsidized, altogether out of proportion to the small amount of taxes contributed by the Arab population. The government leaves sanitation and hygiene largely in the hands of the *Hadassah*, while such activities are its own proper concern.

The government is charged with gross partiality in its distribution of public employment; it is said to give undue preference to Arab labor on road work and public buildings, in the civil service, in postoffice, railroad and telegraph employment; it is said, in the light of previous experience, to be courting imminent danger to the Jewish population by recruiting its police force and gendarmerie almost exclusively from the Arab elements. The government has as yet done little or nothing to cope with the prevalence, principally in the ranks of Jewish labor, of unemployment.

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Living costs in Palestine are inordinately high for several reasons: partly because trade is not well organized, partly because there is, in places, a scarcity of dwellings, largely because of the inconveniences caused by the currency. Until about a month ago Palestine was using, for all financial transactions, the Egyptian pound; this implied a double injustice to a struggling country; it amounted to the equivalent of a loan, to Egypt, without interest, of over seven and a half million dollars; and the monetary unit of a pound (worth more than the English pound) was too high for a population which is in need of a smaller fractional currency than that afforded by the pound. The dependence upon Egyptian money acted as a vexatious handicap to the banking and the business credits of Palestine.

While the higher officials of the British administration in Palestine have the confidence and esteem of all classes, there is much complaint as to the bearing of the lower officials who are even charged with continuing the old system of *bakshish* in which prompt service is to be secured only by special gratuities. It is not improbable that these posts have often been awarded to inferior men on the score of military service.

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Altogether it is difficult to see in what respect the British government and its Palestinian policy are living up to the promise of the Balfour Declaration that the National Home would be "facilitated"; appearances, on the contrary, so runs the complaint, would favor the belief that the government is putting every conceivable obstacle in the way of that consummation.

To be just, however, to the services Great Britain has rendered and is rendering to Palestine, one must consider past, present and probable future. No one disputes that England has brought peace and security to a land in which, for many centuries, neither life nor property had been safe. The improvements accomplished since England took charge are such that the loudest grumblers admit that the very face of the land, its conditions of life, its speed of progress have been radically changed. England, it cannot be disputed, is the only government willing to undertake this trust, which, having had ample experience with the problems of colonial administration, is competent and can be relied upon to serve it acceptably. There is no government on the face of the globe which is so immediately responsive to the will of its people; as a consequence, on the one hand, British statesmen

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must, at all times, be mindful of the powerful cliques, in England itself, which are not friendly to the Palestinian mandate; but, on the other hand, they must be prepared to have every step scrutinized by queries and objections in Parliament. It is important to pacify the Arab majority which had been incited by political agitators against the Balfour Declaration; this necessity was appreciated by the first High Commissioner, Sir Herbert Samuel, a Jew and a Zionist, who made concession after concession to the Arabs and exercised great patience with them, so as to win their confidence.

The loud complaints from Zionist ranks, however, seem at last to have aroused the government and British public opinion so that, along several lines, a change of policy is being planned. The Syrian treaty has been held up; the system of taxation is to be modified in the direction of lightening oppressive imposts; a Palestinian currency has been introduced which means an independent system of financing; the railroads are to be improved and extended; a regular train service, with modern sleeping cars, is to make the distance from London to Haifa in five days; Haifa is to become a modern port; employment on a large scale is to be given to Jewish labor through public works.

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At a testimonial dinner given to Lord Balfour on the tenth anniversary of the Balfour Declaration addresses were made by representatives of the three great parties: Liberal, Labor and Conservative, reaffirming England's purpose to help rebuild Palestine as the National Jewish Home. The Under-State Secretary reminded the gathering that the first principle of good government is to establish internal peace in the country, to balance the budget, to protect enterprise, and gave the assurance that he shared with the Zionists all their hopes and enthusiasm for Palestine and its reconstruction. A Palestine Mandate Society was founded of which Lord Balfour, David Lloyd George and Ramsay MacDonald are members.

While the economic depression has by no means ceased and unemployment still necessitates the distribution of doles by the Zionists, there are several indications that immigration will soon be resumed under more favorable auspices. Even during the worst of the depression the movement towards the Holy Land has not ceased altogether; during the month of October seventy-three Jewish people left Poland for Palestine. There is promise of new activity in the expansion of the Rutenberg electrification project which is to supply all Pales-

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tine with light, heat and power from the Jordan river, in the modernization of the Haifa port, in the exploitation of the rich mineral treasures of the Dead Sea. The government has virtually awarded the contract for a project with ample financial backing by which the salt, sulphur, asphalt, potash and magnesia contained in the Dead Sea, minerals of a value mounting into billions, will be commercially utilized to the advantage of both adjacent countries, Palestine and Transjordania.

From another quarter effective aid may be looked for in the near future. For the last two or three years negotiations have been proceeding in England, France and this country to secure the coöperation of non-Zionist Jews in the upbuilding of Palestine.

Political Zionism, so far, has enlisted comparatively few adherents among the prosperous classes of western Jewry. Prior to the Balfour Declaration the "hard-headed" practical man had disdained the notion, as absurdly inconceivable, that the civilized powers could ever favor the upbuilding of a National Jewish Home in Palestine; until men of the highest civic standing like Justice Louis D. Brandeis, Judge Julian W. Mack, Nathan Straus, openly espoused political Zionism, the movement

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stood, with many timid or over-zealous Jews, in the odor of double allegiance and was denounced by them as belonging to the hyphenated brands of Americanism. Many well-meaning Jewish people go so far in their gratitude for the opportunities they enjoy in democratic countries, that they not only have not the remotest thought of any other national home for themselves, but that they cannot imagine, much less appreciate, the feelings of yearning hope with which a national home in Palestine is viewed by their brothers in places like Poland and Rumania, where the Jew has no protection for his life and property, no rights that the courts can be trusted to uphold, no peace in the present and no prospects for the future. There are even Jewish people of intelligence and standing so cowed by the misapprehensions and slanders of Antisemitism that the creation of a national home appears to them in the light of a menace to their own safety and comfort; they fear that the existence of such a Jewish center will, somehow, lessen their civic standing in western lands, or at least put a weapon into the hands of the Antisemitic agitator who will point to Palestine as the place where they properly belong. In countries like Germany, where Antisemitism is egregiously blatant, even scien-

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tifically pretentious, there are among the Jews large and highly respectable classes of rabid Anti-Zionists to whom political Zionism spells nothing less than high treason, both against their patriotism as Germans and against their peace as Jews.

As against these fears and antipathies, there has gradually grown up a broadening of sympathies and an awakening sense of duty towards the national Jewish home in Palestine. The late Mr. Jacob H. Schiff, himself, for many years, an uncompromising anti-Zionist, was greatly impressed by the coincidence of the catastrophe to Russian Jewish life through the Soviet, on the one hand, and the gradual closing of country after country to Jewish immigration, on the other. He felt that Palestine appeared to be destined to serve as a central reservoir for Jewish learning and Jewish piety, as a fountain-head of Jewish culture and Jewish inspiration in place of the libraries and academies, the nurseries of old tradition and religious enthusiasm which had been devastated and uprooted in Eastern Europe, both during and after the World War.

Among other non-Zionist leaders the feeling has gradually arisen that the Balfour Declaration has placed a responsibility upon the shoulders of all

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Jews; that, should the Jewish effort at rebuilding Palestine end in failure, the discredit would fall upon all Jews.

During the last three or four years there has been a series of conferences between Zionist and non-Zionist leaders with a view, at first toward economic help, later toward organized and systematic coöperation. An integral element in the Palestinian mandate to England consists of a "Jewish Agency" which is to act in an advisory capacity to the British administration in all that concerns the interests of the National Home. Hitherto this Jewish Agency has been represented by the Zionist administration, inasmuch as no other Jewish world-organization had relationships of an official character with the Palestinian government. The Zionists had, from the beginning, disclaimed any intention of monopolizing the great enterprise of Palestinian reconstruction; repeatedly they have invited the aid and the counsel of those who did not share their own nationalist aspirations, but who were desirous of having a share in the rebuilding. After various forms of coöperation had proved lacking in wide and effective appeal, an agreement was finally reached by leaders on both sides that the non-Zionists of western countries should have

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representation on the Jewish Agency numerically equal to that of the Zionists, so that the Jewish Agency should, thereafter, represent not merely the Zionist World Organization, but all Jews, regardless of religious, national or political complexion, who are interested in the welfare and progress of the land of their fathers.

To place this coöperation upon a practical basis, a commission was appointed some months ago to visit Palestine and, with the aid of competent experts, to report a survey of conditions and of the work accomplished, together with recommendations for future work. The members of the commission have paid their visits; at least two of them, in newspaper interviews, have declared their impressions to have been highly favorable; the official report is expected some time in the spring.

An element that has to be reckoned with in any forecast of Palestinian developments is the Arab native who still constitutes something like six-sevenths of the population. His attitude and his psychology are not easy to define; there are scholars who claim that, racially, he is largely descended from Jewish forebears who had been forcibly converted to Mohammedanism.

The Arab is sized up differently according to

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the observer's viewpoint. There are those who, from personal motives, magnify the importance of certain political maneuvers with which the ignorant Arab has little to do, which are simply intended to keep in power the cliques which had been holding Arab peasant and Arab workman in subjection. The Balfour Declaration had been employed by these agitators to stir up Arab against Jew and riots had been instigated by the prospect of loot and by rumors that the government would connive.

Nothing can be more patent, however, than that the Arab is largely profiting from the capital and the enterprise which the Jew brings with him. He sells his lands at a big profit; he has a better market for his crops; as workman he obtains a higher wage; his child has new advantages of schooling; the Jewish physician, the Jewish clinic, the Jewish district nurse, the Jewish milk station, serve him equally; he is admitted to the benefits of the Jewish library, he is learning from the Jewish workman to organize.

The Arab has taken a number of lessons from the Jew, such as speculation in land, such as the coöperative marketing of crops. The Arab is far from dull, nor is he constitutionally indolent, ex-

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cept as the old regime has trained him. He has had, for ages, the lowest of living standards; once his ambition is aroused for better things, he is likely to prove a valuable asset in lifting the land to higher levels.

There are signs on the horizon that he is beginning to emancipate himself from the leading-strings of the demagogues who are using him as their senseless tool. The so-called Executive Committee which has preached a consistent policy of obstruction, is steadily losing influence; the opposition to the National Home is becoming visibly feebler and less confident. Zionist leaders like Colonel Kish have learned how to pacify the Arab; here and there one finds Arabs, like Asis Domet, who dream of a perfect understanding between Jew and Arab and devote their best efforts to bringing it about. The Arab is still a semi-savage, often a misguided one; when he demolishes gravestones in Jewish cemeteries, he is merely emulating the rowdy methods of German Antisemitism; during the attack on the Petach Tikvah colony he committed unspeakable atrocities that remind of the hoodlumism of Russian *pogroms*, but in Petach Tikvah these horrors led to an impressive sequel: the ringleader of the attack had been tried and con-

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demned to twenty years in the penitentiary; when he had served one year, the Petach Tikvah colony addressed to the High Commissioner a petition for his pardon, which was at once accorded. The man was liberated; he came with a number of leading Arabs to a peace banquet to which he had been invited by the colony. He there, of his own accord, made solemn oath that he would nevermore lift his hand against Jews or Jewish undertakings. The oath of an Arab, it is said, has the force of a sacrament.

In the course of a recent interview with the Manchester Guardian, Bishop Godric Kean, Vicar General of the Latin Patriarchate at Jerusalem, who has lived in Palestine during the period of the British mandate, avers that the tension in Palestine between Jew and Arab has decreased, that Palestine is to be regarded as one of the most peaceful places within the British Empire and that the outlook for the country is, indeed, very hopeful. The present arrest in Jewish immigration impresses him as "a transitory phase."

Almost the same language was used by Dr. Weizmann, head of the Zionist World Organization, in the course of a recent tour through Germany; he characterized the present as "a period of transi-

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tion." No period, of course, has ever existed that has brought no transitions, of one kind or another; there are, however, periods of epochal transition, when caterpillar ugliness is passing through chrysalis silence, on its way to the splendors of the butterfly. Some such crucial period is now upon us, in the arduous climb towards a reborn Palestine.

CHAPTER XIV

FAR-SEEING DREAMERS

I HAD come to Palestine by steamer over the sparkling blue waters of the Mediterranean; I left it by the Jerusalem-Cairo train, tracking the tawny, curling sands of the desert; the sea and the desert are integral parts of the Palestine landscape; they must be counted among the fundamental things that have gone to make up the character of land and people.

To see the desert for the first time is to face one of those elemental things in God's creation whose vast, unpeopled stretches, whose simple majesty, whose untamed power arouse the imagination and fill the responsive soul with awe. The ride of fifteen hours, from Jerusalem over Kantara (where the Suez Canal is crossed by ferry) to Cairo was, for at least ten hours of it, one of the hottest I have ever undertaken; some of the passengers seemed to suffer so intensely that they looked more dead than alive; to me, in their novelty, the colors and the shapes, the lights and shadows, the atmosphere

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and the spiritual meanings of this stupendous natural phenomenon, the desert, seemed to speak with so much of pregnant impressiveness, to shine with such irresistible fascination that I gazed and gazed, that I greedily drank in each shifting change, that I pondered and weighed each novel feature, failing to pay much heed to the oven temperature.

I had seen wildernesses before, such as our own alkali lands, such as the stony wilderness of Juda or the desolate salt-tracts around the Dead Sea, but nothing like the boundless horizons of the sand-oceans that form the real desert, a wind-swept sea of creamy, tiny particles that can swallow land and trees and men like any towering waves of storm-tossed waters.

We first approached the sea and were refreshed, for a while, by its breezes. In the sun-baked fields we had seen the toiling Arab women as they would stand up, for a moment, from their back-breaking work, to gaze dreamily after the passing train. The *Fellah* woman is a hard-worked slave; she wears the beautiful embroideries of her own designing on as dirty and shabby a dress as one can see. In the shade of adobe walls or under trees Arab men were drowsing away in blissful siestas, forgetful of passing time, unmindful of tiresome trains.

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Some yellow sand-dunes are outlined against the horizon, a creamy ribbon against the deep blue sky; it must be there that sea and sand are engaged in a perpetual battle, ever encroaching upon each other's territory. We pass two stations with familiar names: Askalon, the famous city of the Philistines, and El Arish, the modern name for the Sinai peninsula, a name which became widely known when England offered that territory to the Zionists for colonization. We come upon a scene of rich color contrasts, as we reach our first oasis; it is a color-sparkling chromo in real life; the Mediterranean on one side of the train, a bluish-green near the shore, a deep azure farther out, with a coast of creamy sand to set off those richer hues; on the other side a dark green forest of majestic date palms, a taller and more luxuriant-looking tree than our sterile date palms at home.

The sand now becomes dominant, more and more, until the desert surrounds us on all sides. One begins to note the strange way in which the sand forms ripples and makes pretty designs before the wind, very much as the snow does on windy slopes in a rolling countryside; one sees no houses, except the square cube-shapes at the railway stations; occasionally the monotony of the

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sand is broken by dried, bluish pools of what had been invading sea water; here and there tiny salt crystals glitter in the sun. We have, some time before, passed the sign which marks the Palestine frontier. Now and then the loneliness of the desert is accentuated, as some small caravan passing along the hill-crests is silhouetted in clear outline between sand and sky; in other places one can see, on the edges of bright oases, the struggle for foothold of tree and shrub or the slow death of some beleaguered tree, as it is drowning pitifully amid the choking sands.

The desert and the sea form only one of many vivid contrasts which are presented by that little land of Palestine, a land shut off on every side by mountain and sea and wilderness, and yet, through its position amid three continents, the necessary highway and the hapless battleground between surrounding empires; a tiny land which comprises, in its many climates and varying seasons, almost every extreme of heat and cold, of drouth and moisture; a land where, at one time, the air is so limpidly clear that all distances deceive while, at another time, it shrouds its hills and lakes in hazy mantles of fairy hues.

Can it be that these contrasts of color and out-

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line, of temperatures and atmospheres, of breadth and narrowness, of peace and war, have had much to do with moulding the souls of that small people of tillers, shepherds and fishermen? Here was a people made historic neither by any wealth of commerce nor by any conquests of war, a people not distinguished for any masterpieces of art, not for the acumen of its scientists, for the depth of its philosophers, for the flights of its poets or for the grasp of its historians, a people whose civilization was crude and primitive, artless and unoriginal, even while its moral and spiritual culture had forged ages ahead of all the master-nations, resplendent with power, that, one after another, lorded it over the little land.

It was a people of dreamers that became uniquely great by the might of spiritual vision, a people that drew its strength from its yearnings for the future, a people kindled and led by visionaries whose aspiring souls, rising majestically over their murky and troubled day, envisioned, with eagle-eyed, forward-leaping fancy, a distant day of brotherliness and peace.

Palestine is the land of the dreamer, the soil for idealism; it started with the far-gazing hope of the immigrant Abraham who yearned to become,

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through his progeny, a blessing to all the families of the earth; it blossomed again in Jacob's stone-pillow dream of the heavenly ladder with its throng of angels; it lived in the mounting fancies of Joseph, that master of dreams, when, as a pensive, high-flown lad, he beheld his sheaf and his star supreme above his brothers' harvests and destinies.

It reached its highest form in the prophet who, starting as the seer, the oracle, the wonder-worker, rose to the stature of the popular tribune, of the rebuker of the mighty, the champion of the down-trodden, the warning voice against idolatry and sin, the stern herald of impending disaster, the messenger of good tidings and the harbinger of God's returning grace.

The prophet was the boldest of all dreamers, the most undaunted of all idealists. It is he whose moral grandeur and spiritual elevation, whose lofty patriotism and all-embracing love of humanity, whose faith in human goodness, whose optimism concerning God-guided progress have steadied the souls and winged the hopes of all idealistic dreamers of successive generations. It is his divine inspiration and his heroic martyrdom that have irradiated the scenes of his struggles with an imperishable halo of pervasive sanctity.

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In age after age the holy soil has bred other dreamers or drawn them to its bosom from distant lands. In Jewish history it is a long and rich chapter that tells of the scholars and poets, of the mystics and sages that have felt and yielded to an irresistible urge to journey to the land of their fathers, there to feed the flames of their patriotic ardor, to live a contemplative life of study and of pious observance, to find their last resting-places in holy ground.

There is a modern section of that chapter, of more immediate and vital interest, which tells of the dreamers of our later day who have yielded to this potent magnetism of memories and associations. They have been of all classes, ranks and occupations. There have been writers, Jewish and Christian, like Benjamin Disraeli and the Olliphants, who kindled their imaginations at this altar of holy memories; there have been philanthropists like Charles Netter, Judah Touro, Moses Montefiore, Edmond de Rothschild, who founded and endowed charities, institutions, colonies; there have been groups of men, long before political Zionism and the Balfour Declaration, who, even athwart the whimsical inhibitions and incalculable despotsms of Turkish corruption, defied the miasmas

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of the swamp and the banditries of the Bedouin to build up homespots in the land they loved. As, according to one of the early Church Fathers, the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church, even so has the Palestinian soil been fertilized, like no other, with the sweat and blood of uncounted idealists.

When you visit the land you are made constantly to feel that it thrives on stories of idealism and heroism, stories that tend to withdraw into the cloudland of legend, that it pulsates with the breath of idealism, as embodied in many forms.

There is, most inspiring of them all, the story of Joseph Trumpeldor. He had lost an arm, as a Russian soldier in the war against Japan, had been decorated with an order, risen to the grade of an officer, distinctions rarely attained in that army by a Jew. Fighting, with his one arm, at Gallipoli, he had become a captain in the British army. When Palestine was conquered and he remained as a colonist, he chose for himself the post of utmost danger, near Tel Hai, the northermost settlement, by the Syrian border. The region had always been peculiarly subject to Bedouin raids; it became more dangerous in 1920, while the Syrians, only a few miles away, were in revolt against the

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French. Trumpeldor, with a few brave companions, men and women, chose this outpost because he wished to make sure that, when the frontier would be decided upon, the region would be part of Palestine. Defending themselves in a barn against overwhelming numbers, they died, a mere handful of men and women; the last words he uttered were: "No matter, it is good to die for our country." A few slabs of rough marble mark their graves; but the memory of Trumpeldor marches on. His heroic end has been dramatized by a Christian Arab whose rather crude play describes the long drawn, hopeless struggle against crushing numbers, the calm defense of the forlorn post, the brave facing of the inevitable end. Every colony has its "home guard" on horseback, the so-called *Shomrim* or keepers, who are on watch against raids or attacks, ready to take the first brunt of any rising outbreak. They find their beau-ideal in Joseph Trumpeldor.

A young woman figures in a similar story. There was a Rumanian Jewish family, by the name of Aronson, that furnished three distinguished members, Aaron, Alexander and Sarah; Aaron, a notable agronomist, had rendered invaluable service to agriculture, not only in Palestine, but the world

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over, by discovering, on the slopes of Mt. Hermon, the parent-wheat, the sturdy weed from which, by cultivation, had sprung the many varieties of that cereal. The value of the discovery consisted in the boundless possibilities of hybridizing by which weaker varieties could be enabled to resist heat and cold, drouth and disease. He died shortly after the end of the World War, the victim of an airplane accident. Alexander was a soldier in Turkish captivity who has published an account of his adventurous experiences. Aaron and Sarah are said to have rendered valuable aid to the British army in its difficult task of crossing the desert from Egypt to Palestine. Through some untoward accident Sarah fell into the hands of the Turkish army and had the most fiendish tortures inflicted upon her in the effort to wrest from her a betrayal of the English plans. She held out unwaveringly against her tormentors, but committed suicide, to put an end to intolerable agonies.

A heroism of iron perseverance, winning a life-long battle against poverty, sickness and persecution, marks the career of Eliezer Ben Yehudah, author of the "Treasurehouse of all Hebrewdom" (*Thesaurus Omnis Hebraitatis*), which undertakes, in ten volumes, (of which seven have been

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published), to gather, out of the literary store-houses of some thirty centuries, the whole wealth of Hebrew words, phrases and idioms, adding new terms to serve for modern objects and ideas. He was a Russian Jew, Eliezer Isaac Elianow, who, coming to Paris as a young man, conceived it as his life mission, making his home in Palestine, to restore the Hebrew language to its former place in the most intimate life of his people. While he was fortunate in the loyal aid of his wife who consented to conduct home-life and child-rearing in the Hebrew tongue, the first mother to undertake such a task, he had three bitter enemies to face in the consumption which ravished his strength, the poverty which dogged his footsteps and the persecution of fanatics who looked upon his endeavors as irreverent and un-Jewish. As he fought on, making propaganda for his idea in periodicals and by journeys, jeered at, imprisoned, stoned in the streets, often working eighteen hours a day, he constantly widened the circle of his friends and co-workers. Before he died, five years ago, he had completed all except four letters of the alphabet and had seen his life-dream realized in two generations of Hebrew-speaking children. His second wife, sister of the first, is completing the work with

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the aid of his sons. When I visited her in the beautiful home which is a gift of the Jewish nation to the champion of its ancient tongue (he lived only to see the cornerstone laid) she showed me the huge chests of manuscript notes over which this consumptive with a steadfast purpose had spent his days and nights; a pedestalled bust of the man graces the front of the house which it was not vouchsafed him to enter, but which seems filled with his spiritual presence.

The scholar-idealist finds the Palestine air peculiarly congenial; I met him in many interesting guises. There are battles of the intellect, calling for as fearless a courage as any conflicts at arms; there are scholarly lives which demand the ascetism of the hermit and the devotion of the lover, the endurance of contumely and the defiance of slander.

Among the homes in which I spent memorable hours were those of two men, a Jewish scholar and a Christian clergyman, who complemented each other in strange ways. The former had written, in New Hebrew, some three or four years ago, the most elaborate and scientific life of Jesus ever put forth by a professing Jew; he had sought to explain the appearance and teachings of that epochal

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figure out of the anomalous conditions of the time and to strike a just balance between the life and lore of the man and between the traditions and convictions of his Jewish contemporaries. It was a serious and courageous endeavor, based upon a lifetime study of that and preceding periods. I found the author to be a man of infirm health, the born student of mild and kindly temperament, professor at the Hebrew University where, upon his invitation, I attended one of his lectures, in Hebrew, on modern Jewish history. To sit on those rude benches among young men and women from many lands who followed their loved teacher with keen interest was a memorable experience.

He had been fortunate in finding an English translator for his work who brought to the task a rare combination of competency and fairness, a leading Christian clergyman in the Holy City, whose remarkable Jewish scholarship enables him to converse fluently in modern Hebrew and to introduce his friend's labors to the English-speaking world. Here is a scholar whose objectivity fits him to present, with spiritual insight, the inner life of an alien faith; his interpretations of Jewish forms of worship and his narrative of the story of the *Chassidim* are equally remarkable for their sym-

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pathetic comprehension as for their scholarly accuracy and thoroughness.

A Christian scholar who is the acknowledged dean of Palestinian archæology is a Dominican Father of great eloquence and charm whose (French) lecture on the most recent archæological problems I found attended by cultured people of all denominations. I met numbers of other scholars, some connected with the Hebrew University, others pursuing their studies privately, whose wide and mature learning, whose strong and fine personalities are tending to raise the intellectual atmosphere of the Holy City.

Two curious types of idealist belonging to the scholar class were men who impressed me, partly by their grappling with towering obstacles, mostly by the single-minded devotion with which they are pursuing their chosen paths. One of them, a botanist by profession, with a young artist wife, is giving all his time and strength to the preparation of a great work on the Palestinian flora which, in completeness and scientific accuracy, in beauty of artistic outfit, is to be at least the equal of any similar work; some of the colored plates which are finished give every promise of a monumental volume. One is reminded of Audubon's pleadings

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with the rich for subscriptions to his immortal work on American birds, when one is told of the financial difficulties in launching such a work.

A puzzling figure was a modest Hebrew scholar who is giving his life to the task of enriching New Hebrew literature with two series of works, translations and originals, one series on jurisprudence, another on philosophy. How, with his meager resources, he has managed to issue a number of model publications, how he contrives to toil on in the midst of many discouragements, simply passes one's powers of comprehension.

The artist in Palestine must feed his inner life, almost beyond other classes, on the sustaining elixirs of idealism. The head of the Bezalel art school is, perhaps, the greatest dreamer of them all and yet surprises one by the fertility of his practical resources. Of the several artists with whom I became acquainted in various ways I was most impressed by a young man approaching middle age whom I met in Tel Aviv. When a young American colleague took me to an exhibition of this artist's work, I could not but be struck at once by the sharp difference between three or four samples of his earlier work and all the rest of his paintings and sketches. It seems that, until a

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few years ago, he was a follower of the classical school and painted, most acceptably, along academic lines; he now cultivates a curious style which, by the simplicity, the almost stiffness of its outlines, by the virtually complete absence of perspective, by its flatness and sobriety of coloring, greatly reminds of early mediæval art. I met the artist a number of times and did not conceal from him my lack of appreciation for his later style. He defended it as the only style with which a national art movement could hope to start; in painting the portrait of a pretty young woman he made a disappointing likeness, far from flattering, which he claimed represented his conception of her features. His philosophy of art bids the artist give his subjective impressions as the only sincere interpretations of reality. To me these interpretations, among them a bust of the artist by a Parisian sculptor friend, seemed to be bordering dangerously close on caricature. Yet these notions have an idealistic basis in the endeavor to found a national art.

Zionism itself exercises upon the constitutional idealist an irresistible attraction, by the romance of a national revival after twenty centuries of homelessness, by the difficulty of rerooting in the soil a people of traders, factory hands and stu-

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dents, by its entwining of Occident and Orient, by its recreation of cultural values. Men and women whose love of their kind impels them to aid in the advancement of human welfare, lovers of their people, whose sympathies, whose sense of justice have been aroused by an unending chain of oppressions and violences, many of these gather themselves into the movement; some of them, burning all bridges of career or livelihood behind them, give their whole lives to its service; others, having contributed for many years whatever they could spare of material and spiritual resource, come to Palestine to see the incipient fructious of so many sacrifices.

Under such circumstances it is no wonder that one notes in the social, artistic and working life of Palestinian circles a perfection of democracy which it would be hard to match elsewhere. Differences of rank or station, of wealth, education or descent are almost non-existent; introductions are not needed; all fraternize readily and informally; the laborer behind the plow or the worker on the road may happen, in his or her rough clothes, to be a scholar or an artist. There is something in the air that cements souls, that removes all strangeness: the upward urge of an awakening nation.

CHAPTER XV

A JEWISH WORLD-GATHERING

MY trip to Palestine ended as I crossed the desert into Egypt; but it had a kind of epilogue in my attendance upon the Fifteenth Zionist World Congress at Basle. It is impossible to have a just appreciation of Zionism without an actual visit to Palestine; it is equally impossible to evaluate the Palestinian rebirth unless one has witnessed the biennial gathering of its leaders. As this had been my first visit to the Holy Land, so it was my first attendance at a Zionist World Congress.

Many readers are aware that the first of these congresses took place at Basle thirty years ago, under the leadership of Dr. Theodor Herzl. By a strange coincidence it had been at Basle, a year before, in 1896, that I had, out of pure curiosity, purchased a yellow-covered German pamphlet, "The Jewish State," Dr. Herzl's first attempt to put forth his theories and proposals, proposals

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which, to the ordinary, practical mind, looked hopelessly fantastic and unworkable.

His best friends in Vienna shook their heads and were inclined to fear that he had lost his mental balance. But to the Jews of Russia and Poland these ideas and plans were like the tinder set to a powder-barrel; all over the world there were choice spirits that were aroused to kindred enthusiasm, so that political Zionism started its career of many surprises by actualizing a declared impossibility: the assembling of a Jewish World Congress. The gathering, of course, was leagues away from representing all classes, ranks, religious and political complexions of dispersed Jewry; but geographically it was, in twenty centuries, the first Jewish conference from the four corners of the globe.

I was fortunate in the advantages of preparation which were afforded me by another convention, some two weeks earlier. I had also been elected delegate to an international Jewish conference, meeting in Zurich, which was to consider Jewish minority rights in various countries. Part of the Versailles treaty consisted in the demand that the newly created or largely expanded commonwealths must guarantee in their constitutions that they will give due protection to the civic and religious rights,

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to the rights of language and education that ought to be extended to minorities in their territory which belonged to other races or nationalities. Of all these minorities the Jews happen to be the most scattered and helpless. At the Versailles Conference a committee of Jewish experts had been very influential in helping to define these rights; this committee had been continued in order to prevent or give notice of infringements; but the committee was without mandate and lacked official, organized backing. The conference had been assembled principally in order to call into being some properly constituted organization which would attend authoritatively and systematically to these needs.

In many ways this smaller convention afforded valuable training for the conditions and methods of the larger gathering. Its sixty-five members came from some thirteen countries, distributed over four continents. Small as the convention was, it comprised a large proportion of well-known leaders, such as the greatest living Jewish historian, some of the foremost Zionists, many members of the Polish *Sejm*, eminent rabbis, influential journalists; at least every third man seemed to have the doctor or professor title; most of them came as the representatives of large Jewish bodies.

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The largest delegation came from America, a fact that was highly encouraging to the East-European delegates.

A vexatious difficulty which is inherent in the status of dispersion was the multiplicity of languages; attending a Jewish world-conference puts one through a strenuous exercise in linguistics; in the course of the Zionist congress the limit was reached at a certain memorial meeting the eloquent addresses of which were couched in no less than six languages: German, French and English, Hebrew, Yiddish and Russian; an audience must be possessed of more than ordinary patience or more than extraordinary enthusiasm to go unmurmuringly through these constant presto changes from one language to another.

To the American delegation, especially those unused to East-European ways of conducting meetings, a number of tiresome practices was rather trying, such as the interminable oratory which would not hear of time limitations, the constant, sometimes turbulent, interruptions, the lax methods of presiding, all of them more or less characteristic of East-European lack of discipline.

On the other hand, the American delegation tried the patience of its fellow delegates by pro-

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longed meetings of its own which often delayed the principal sessions.

All of these features were to be repeated on a larger scale in the Zionist congress; but none of them had the power of preventing a satisfactory consummation of the purposes for which these conferences had been called.

The Zionist congress at Basle, about two weeks later, was a very much larger affair; it brought together some 270 delegates and about 1,500 visitors. The Zurich convention had met at a small old courthouse; the Basle congress was housed in a splendid, almost new edifice of vast proportions, an industrial exposition building (*Messe-Gebäude*) which, with its several large halls and innumerable committee rooms, formed a puzzling labyrinth wherein it took some time to learn one's way. There were two tall pillars in front of the building which served, after sunset, as enormous torches; Swiss and Zionist flags fluttered in the breezes; there was an abundance of life about the building, what with numerous offices for the guidance of delegate and visitor, with stalls for the sale of periodicals, books, art objects, souvenirs, with crowds ever thronging in corridors and on steps, discussing, arguing, exchanging greetings.

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An interesting feature was furnished by some 300 boy and girl scouts who had hiked to Basle all the way from Czechoslovakia to witness the convention and to give their services as ushers and messengers.

Most of the American delegates had come to Basle three or four days before the congress opened, in obedience to a call for preliminary meetings at which the delegation might agree on certain proposals to be put forward by the group, on particular policies to be espoused, with a view to acting as a unit, so far as practicable. These meetings were held at the parlors of the hotel which had been chosen as American headquarters, under the chairmanship of the president of the American organization; the American delegation was soon joined in its deliberations by representatives from England, Canada and South Africa; the meetings continued after Congress had opened; members of the administration appeared before some of them in order to defend their policies, to clear up doubts and reply to objections. Virtually the entire American group belonged to the so-called Center which stands for general Zionism and supports the administration; as against the Center which formed the large majority of the assemblage, the *Mizrachi*

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(Sunrise Party), standing for orthodox Judaism, formed the right wing, the Labor Party the left; in addition to these factions there were the Revisionists, vigorous opponents of the administration, who advocate a radical change of policies and leaders.

Personality and past service, naturally, play a large rôle in a gathering of so many leaders and of such a widespread geographical provenance. The ruling spirit of the Congress was, unmistakably, the president of the organization, Dr. Chaim Weizmann, a rare and striking combination of scientist and orator, statesman and diplomat. Dr. Weizmann is a Russian Jew, educated in Switzerland and Germany, who has been connected, as professor of chemistry, with Owens College in Manchester, England. Having been prominently identified with Zionism for a number of years, he rendered a service of high distinction to the Allies at a critical period of the World War by enabling them, through a practicable formula for TNT, to cope with the high explosives employed by the Central Powers. When he was asked to name a reward for his most timely invention, he renounced all compensation, but asked for a promise that, whenever Palestine should fall into the hands of the Allies, England would do something for the

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Jews. A large share of the credit for the Balfour Declaration belongs thus to Weizmann, whose influence had much to do with the consistent sympathies for Zionism that have been shown by such paramount leaders as Lord Balfour, Lloyd George, Robert Cecil, Lord Milner, General Smuts, Ramsay MacDonald and others.

Another outstanding figure of the Congress, second only to Weizmann, is the vice president of the Zionist World Organization, Nahum Sokolow, a journalist, orator and scholar of no mean accomplishments. In an assembly which flits so fitfully from one language to another the born linguist commands, of course, a considerable advantage. Mr. Sokolow is, in all probability, the greatest linguist that has ever appeared in the world's annals of journalism; he has the command of a literary master over some six or seven languages in several of which he ranks with their best writers and speakers. Yet there are others in the assembly, like its chairman, Dr. Leo Motzkin, or the head of the Revisionists, Vladimir Jabotinsky, who, on public platforms and in the press, are easily masters of four or more languages. Dr. Weizmann himself belongs distinctly to this curious category of many-tongued orators.

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There were in attendance two outstanding rabbis and two brilliant writers, by the side of many stars of the second and third magnitude. The Chief Rabbi of Vienna, Dr. Zevi Perez Chayes, was perhaps the most universally venerated member of the convention. A lucid and persuasive speaker, a personality that combined strong virility with irresistible charm, he had the rare quality of ranking, at one and the same time, as one of the foremost of Bible critics and rabbinic scholars and as a man of the broadest occidental culture. Descended from an old family tree of famous Galician scholars, he had taught and preached for many years, as rabbi and professor, at Florence and Trieste, before he was chosen the spiritual head of the great Vienna community. There he had identified himself at once with the masses as against the classes in his vigorous championship of Zionism. His passing away, a few weeks ago, meant an irreparable loss, alike to the world of scholarship, to the cause of the Jewish poor and to the forces of Zionism.

The most important member of the American delegation was Rev. Dr. Stephen S. Wise, founder and head of the Free Synagogue and the Jewish Institute of Religion in New York, whose amazing

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energy, finished oratory and magnetic personality have made his name a household word in many circles, Jewish and non-Jewish, European as well as American. Dr. Wise headed one of the most important of the committees.

Germany and England delegated to the convention two highly interesting figures in Dr. Martin Buber and Philip Guedalla. Dr. Buber, descended from one of the foremost modern critics of rabbinic literature, is best known for his introduction of Chassidism (an emotional school of East-European Judaism) to the modern reader; he is at present engaged in publishing a new German translation of the Old Testament, the first volumes of which have been greeted by some Christian reviewers in the German press as superior in forcefulness and vigor even to Martin Luther's pithy and downright phrasing.

Mr. Guedalla, a very young man, possibly still in his thirties, has already to his credit a number of historic works of the biographical order, such as his "Fathers of the American Republic" (I am quoting the title from memory) and his "Lord Palmerston," which are characterized by a complete mastery of the sources and a charming popular style. His early entrance into English litera-

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ture and polities (he is a member of the House of Commons) seems to remind of the meteoric rise of Benjamin Disraeli. He is a calm, ironic speaker of quiet force and great self-command; he heads the English Zionist Federation which is as unfashionable with the Jewish elite in England as the movement is in other Western countries.

The chapter of personalities in a Zionist World Congress is not readily exhausted and must be left incomplete; there is any number of figures which tempt one to limn them, such as the two leaders of the Jewish group in the Polish *Sejm*, Dr. Isaac Gruebaum and Dr. Leo Reich, such as the powerful head of the Mizrachi party, Dr. Meyer Berlin, such as the two engineer-Zionists, both picturesque and brilliant figures, Vladimir Tiomkin of Paris (recently deceased), and M. M. Ussischkin of Palestine, such as the eloquent Palestinian labor leaders, Dr. Arlosorof and Katzenelson, such as the witty German attorney, a well-known humorous writer, S. Gronemann, with many, many others. Conspicuous among visitors were the wife of the first High Commissioner of Palestine, Sir Herbert Samuel, accompanied by Mrs. Dugdale, a niece of Lord Balfour, both of whom were untiringly assiduous in attending the sessions.

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Enjoying the unmerited honor of being elected as one of the two vice presidents representing the American delegation, I had, seated on the platform, the twofold advantage of being able to follow the proceedings more closely and of viewing the reactions of the audience. The delegates were largely seated by factions, except the Americans, who made the strategic error of scattering over the hall. Now and then the guests in the rear and in the galleries would invite rebukes from the chair by too emphatic demonstrations of partisanship; the delegates themselves made speaking difficult by a good deal of restlessness, probably due to the late hours of committee sessions and to the nervous strains incidental to the gathering.

It was a little unfortunate that many Americans were unable to remain to the end of the Congress, having engaged return passage at a time when the Congress had been announced as opening almost a week sooner. The Congress and especially the Center were greatly weakened by these premature departures, so that the most important final vote showed only one-half the delegates present. When, at the second session, the "Congress-Court" which examines mandates reported the list of authorized delegates, it was found that the United States had

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the lead with fifty-three, that Poland came next with thirty-eight, then Palestine with twenty-seven, Germany with twelve, England with eight. Other American lands represented were Argentine and Chile. African countries were Tunis, Tangiers, Egypt, South Africa. In Asia there were Palestine, Syria and Farther India; in Europe, in addition to the countries mentioned, about sixteen others.

The Congress opened with a long evening session, devoted to a number of official greetings and to two memorial addresses, one in Hebrew, one in German, on Achad Haam, the greatest of prose writers in modern Hebrew literature, who had passed away since the last Congress.

Dr. Weizmann made the opening address in which he gave a general review of the progress and achievements of political Zionism during its first thirty years of existence; he was followed by a similar estimate, more philosophical than historic, on the part of Nahum Sokolow, the vice president. There followed a series of welcomes, delivered in the name of the city of Basle, the British minister to Switzerland, the president of the Swiss republic, the Jewish community of Basle and other local Jewish organizations. A number of distinguished Swiss officials were in attendance.

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To string out the details of a two weeks' convention, the latter half of which I was compelled to miss, would be to run a grave risk of boredom; it will be more helpful to touch upon the high lights of those proceedings which I was privileged to witness and to arrive at some reasonably safe conclusions as to the resulting situation and its probable outlook.

The convention, for a number of days, was leading a double life. In various rooms, behind closed doors, committees of varying degrees of importance were considering resolutions, shaping programs, working towards definite recommendations; these meetings were so essential to disposing of the most difficult problems that they encroached upon the convention itself which, for one day, held no sessions at all, to afford them sufficient time. In the convention itself each party or faction was permitted, through its delegated speaker, to present its view of the work that had been done and of the measures that ought to be taken; in the interest of fairness the speakers against the administration were given a double allowance of time. Dr. Weizmann had delivered, at a previous session, a second address, in which he had presented a general account of last year's work, reserving many details

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for a later time, when he would be called upon to defend his policy.

It was a long-drawn battle between champions and adversaries, a feast of oratory which demanded an insatiable appetite for these delights and a nimble versatility in various languages, to ward off weariness pending its duration of almost three days. Naturally, the attacks of the antis were more vigorous than the defences of the pros, though there was no lack of warmth and occasional wit on either side.

The palm of eloquence was awarded by friend and foe to the head of the Revisionists, Lieutenant Jabotinsky, whose vigorous exposé of the foibles of the Zionist administration and the sins of the British government, an exposé characterized by surprising moderation, was warmly applauded, even by those who were farthest from sharing his views. A severe critic whose vehement attacks failed to win the sympathies of his audience was the radical, Dr. Isaac Gruenbaum; among the speakers there were several whose attitude was one partly of approval, partly of criticism. There were occasional clashes between right and left wing, as statements were challenged by one side or another.

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The oratorical battle had a solemn armistice in an imposing celebration, recalling the first Congress, of which the present one is the thirtieth anniversary. The festive gathering was held in the Casino, a small city club, which had harbored the first Congress; on the platform sat twenty-five men who had taken part in those memorable proceedings. The addresses, in six languages, were delivered by friends and co-laborers of Dr. Herzl; most of them were reminiscent of Zionist beginnings and of the fascinating personality of the man who had dominated them. It can hardly be doubted that the impressive dignity of the celebration went far towards mitigating dissensions and elevating the spiritual atmosphere; it suggested, at a time of depression, an encouraging realization of the progress that has been achieved in these thirty years.

The real climax of the meeting, however, its *pièce de résistance*, was reached with Dr. Weizmann's defense, which began at the unusual hour of midnight and lasted almost two hours; it exhibited the supremacy of the leader with dramatic force. For three days he had been listening to all sorts of fault-findings with scarcely the least interjection on his part, with facial expression mostly passive, betraying no feeling and little interest;

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he came to his biennial bout with his cavillers in perfect form for a conflict: bright-eyed, his movements full of elastic grace, the very picture of a supremely skillful swordsman, a man of superior information, of a wit of lightning rapidity, of earnest, simple, unaffected eloquence. The audience had begun to gather and increase as the evening bore on; by the time the hour of midnight approached for which his address had been announced, there was not a seat unfilled. It was an intellectual treat of the highest order to follow the steady unfolding of his argument, to note the clear incisiveness with which he scored his points, the playful ease with which he disposed of plausible objections, the gentle touch of irony and sarcasm with which he half-complimented and wholly disarmed his opponents.

It was a supplemental kind of treat, from the stage where I sat, to watch the audience, how breathlessly it followed point after point, how delightedly even members of the opposition enjoyed the brilliant performance, how completely the assembly was swayed by the magic of apposite speech and the magnetism of a sparkling personality. Right in front sat the men who had hurled the most resplendent of thunderbolts, Jabotinsky,

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Gruenbaum and others; it was fascinating to study their countenances as the turn of each would come to be publicly broiled on the spits of genial ridicule and sarcastic refutation, as their statements were being dissected and their contradictions exposed; they hid their inward dismay, their sense of utter rout, behind studied masks, the one with a rigid clamping of determined jaws, the other with a fixed, unnatural smile.

It was especially in Weizmann's splendid defence of the British government, in his shrewd, tactful setting forth of the precarious state of British public opinion, that he shone forth as the statesman and diplomat who has not, among the Zionists, one solitary approximate rival.

The Congress faced, I was told, a difficult situation in its latter course, partly through the leaving of many delegates from remote lands, partly through the sharpening of party differences. It ended in a victory for Dr. Weizmann, the Center and the American delegation, inasmuch as the expansion of the Jewish Agency was resanctioned, resolutions adopted which, with a specification of grievances, called upon the British government for a less passive and more helpful attitude; finally a Palestinian executive committee of three elected,

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in compliance with the urgent pleas of the American organization. On this committee there are two Englishmen and one American, Miss Henrietta Szold, founder of the *Hadassah*.

When Dr. Weizmann visited Palestine in October, his farewell words expressed the strong conviction that, while there existed difficulties, they could be overcome by united work. The near future will bring three important developments in Palestine: the progressive electrification of the Jordan water power, the modernization of the port of Haifa and the exploitation of the Dead Sea, said to be the world's richest body of water in the value of its mineral contents.

In the Zionist world the report of the Commission on Survey is to be presented in the spring; non-Zionist elements are to strengthen the Jewish Agency. The reconstruction of Palestine had its first set-back, due to financial deflation in Poland, inflation of ground values in Palestine and defects of organization. The movement will be the stronger for having passed through its childhood ailments.

THE END

